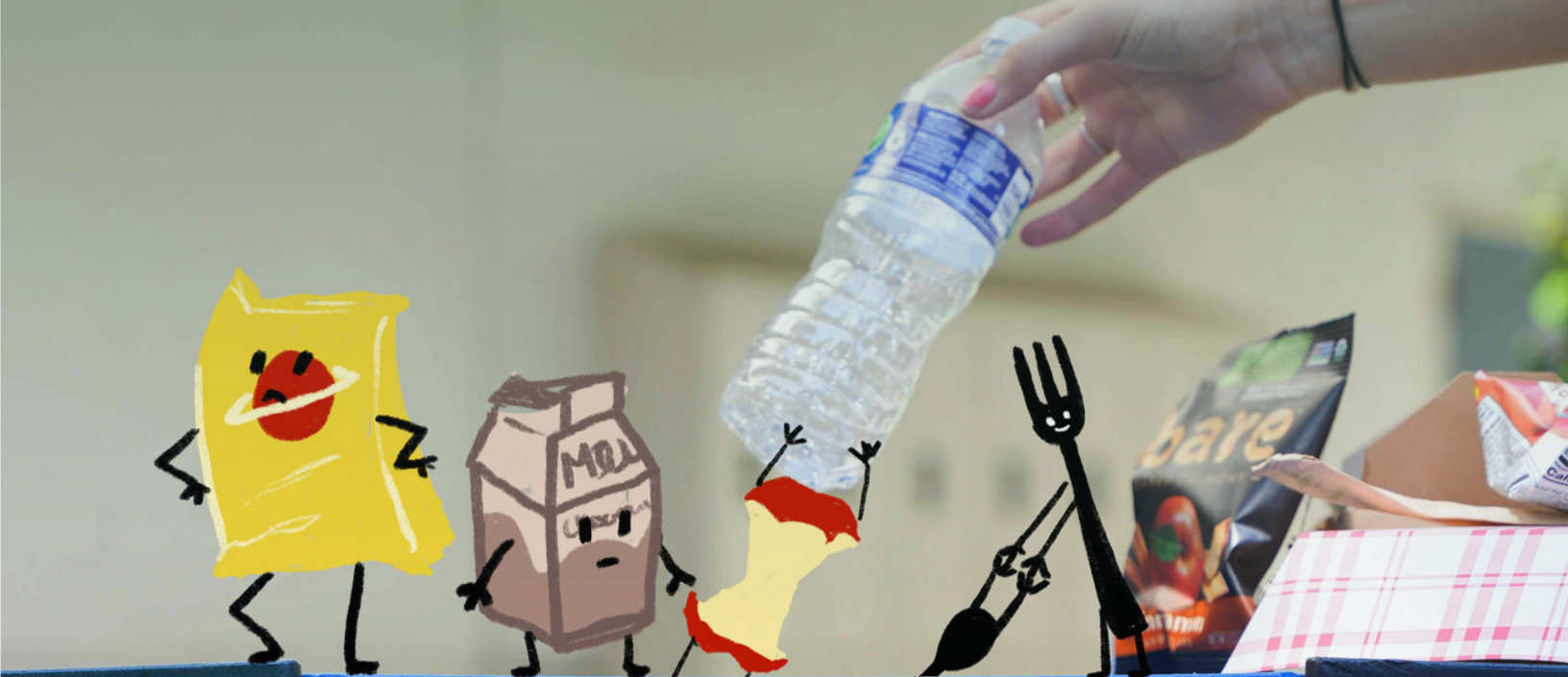

Issue 2 | Volume 85 | October 2024

BLUEPRINT

Examining Lamorinda Sustainable Initiatives

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Dear *Blueprint* Reader,

We are thrilled to share *Blueprint's* second issue of Volume 85. In this issue, *Blueprint* covers a variety of on-campus topics, such as a collaborative potluck in celebration of LatinX Heritage Month and the Acalanes Union High School District's (AUHSD) adoption of a new college research platform.

Our cover story discusses the dynamic range of sustainable initiatives within the Lamorinda Community, including district-wide renewable energy policies and green practices unique to school sites. *Blueprint* explores how these initiatives uphold California's leadership in sustainable development and the challenges that still remain for the AUHSD. We hope this article inspires an open discussion.

Additionally, turn to pages 30, 35 and 37 to read related stories, where Blueprint highlights a movement among youth taking up thrifting, examines overconsumption in an eco-conscious lens, and analyses the presence of botanical sexism in Lafayette.

As always, to submit a response to any story within our paper, scan the QR code to submit a letter to the editor through Blueprint Online. Please refer to the bottom of the Table of Contents for Blueprint's mission statement. We hope you enjoy this issue of Blueprint and look forward to sharing more stories in the future.

Maya Agarwal & Avery Robb, Print Editors-in-Chief

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Empowerment Meets Action

AUHSD Hosts its 5th Annual BSU Summit

Audrey Tugade and Tselmeg Orgilmunkh | Staff Writers

The Black Student Union's (BSU) fifth annual summit fosters connections between students across the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) on a day filled with inspiration, empowerment, and learning.

The BSU clubs of Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas, and Miramonte High School, in collaboration with the District's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Board, hosted the annual BSU Summit on Sept. 30. The summit brought together a district-wide student body to participate in discussions and activities focused on celebrating African culture and heritage.

Each year, students and adults from across the district who attend the event participate in dynamic agendas that the BSU clubs create.

"We have had different speakers from sport teams and youth groups come in, and last year we had an African drumming circle and African dance tutorials," BSU Secretary and sophomore Leila Freeman said.

The summit aims to embrace heritage, celebrate diversity, educate the community about mental health, and help students and staff understand the experiences of their peers as Black people in the AUHSD. BSU leaders seek to foster a sense of community among Black students across the district and empower individuals to carry forward the rich legacy of African culture.

"We're trying to address the disconnect between our culture brought on by the history of America and African Americans. So we really want to go back and learn about our culture and traditions from Africa and the tribes that we are from," BSU Co-President and junior Ash Dawkins said.

Students believe attending the summit is an experience that fosters a sense of community among Black students across the district. This year the summit presented many different activities and hosted guest speakers to embrace diversity and celebrate African heritage.

"I liked the poetry slam, it was unique and inspiring to listen to. Watching the different poets was fun and [it was] interesting to see each of their different perspectives," Las Lomas sophomore Maeson Christian said.

At the summit, around 100 students and adults attended, and each school organized and presented an activity. Acalanes BSU Co-Presidents Elijah Williams and Ash Dawkins organized a competitive game of Guess the Black Athlete.

Ashanti Branch, founder and executive director of the Ever Forward Club and creator of Million Mask Movement, was one presenter at the summit. Branch spoke on a variety of experiences pertaining to personal identity, including mental health.

Blueprint Photo/Audrey Tugade
BSU members give a presentation during the summit with guest speaker Gerome Evans.

"There's more to you than anybody can see by looking at you, and I think knowing what young people are experiencing through these masks, our goal is to show you're not alone. How can we help people take opportunities and think what if I can do this for my peers? What if I want to help my school realize that we have to stop being so mean to each other?" Branch said.

BSU members stress the significance of Black history as a chief component of American history, noting that learning about this topic often involves exploring their rich heritage and contributions to the United States. The BSU Summit aims to educate students on their culture and celebrate traditions.

"It's important [to learn about our culture] especially for African American students because we've grown up in America around White people and due to slavery we were completely ripped away from our culture," Dawkins said. "In order to understand, we have to learn about it and be able to understand the history about what happened to us and why it's significant to our history today."

The speakers and event highlighted the African diaspora's influence on the art and music of societies across the globe.

"As an adult within the United States today, I didn't realize how many African people all over the world, no matter if they are in America, Korea, Europe, Asia ... have contributed, and art is the most important part of this," African Arts Academy President, founder, and executive director Fely Tchaco said.

The BSU summit provides for many students a sense of community with shared experiences, giving them a space to learn as they speak about their experience. With a variety of cultures within America, celebrating diversity can help enhance new perspectives and ideas.

"The goal of the BSU summit is to bring together all the different Black students from all the schools in the district and create community between us all," Dawkins said.

CELEBRATING LATINX HERITAGE MONTH AT ACALANES

Capturing the school events of LatinX Heritage Month

Trevor Krick and Noah Frankel | Staff Writers

Photos by: Molly Jones, Trevor Krick, and Noah Frankel | Print Photo Story Editor and Staff Writers
Spread by Molly Jones | Print Photo Story Editor

Acalanes leadership and the school club Latinos Unidos join hands from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 to celebrate LatinX Heritage Month. This year, they organized various events including a LatinX potluck, Zumba dance class, and guest speaker Anthony Rodriguez night to commemorate LatinX culture. The Spanish classes also designed assignments to expose students to the different cultural events around campus and the local community.

LatinX Potluck

Acalanes collaborated with Campolindo High School to host a potluck before the Acalanes-Campolindo women's volleyball game on Sept. 19. The potluck highlighted foods from different LatinX cultures and exposed students to LatinX cuisine.

"The event showcase[d] the LatinX culture because a lot of the culture that people know of is food, and I feel like it [allowed] everyone interested to experience their very diverse food," Diversity Board Head and sophomore Noah Xavier Blackhart said.

Blackhart, along with Latinos Unidos, planned the potluck as an intradistrict event to promote publicity for the event and encourage the larger AUHSD community to attend.

"I think it was important to collaborate with Campo [for the potluck] because the volleyball game was going on at the same time, and just getting that [additional] publicity for the LatinX culture, and more attendance means more representation for the LatinX culture," Blackhart said.

"Mes de la Herencia Latina"

The Acalanes language department created the "Mes de la Herencia Latina" assignment for Spanish 2, 3, and 4 students schoolwide in honor of LatinX Heritage Month. The assignment requires students to attend at least one LatinX event at school or in the community.

"We have an event for Spanish 3 students to go to the [restaurant] Peña Pachamama, which is a South American restaurant in North Beach, San Francisco. We also have a cultural project mandatory for levels 2, 3, and 4, where they have to participate in an activity ... encouraging them also to explore all the leadership activities that are happening," Spanish 3 and English Language Learner

teacher Elizabeth Holland said.

The LatinX Heritage Month project that the language department takes part in is part of an initiative to promote LatinX culture throughout the year. This project helps teach students ways to get involved, commemorate, and gain a further understanding of LatinX culture .

"I hope that [the celebration of LatinX culture] is not just confined to one month or 30 days, but it's something that can be brought into the curriculum across the board throughout the school year. If everyone could do a little bit in their curriculum, it would be beneficial," Holland said.

Zumba Class

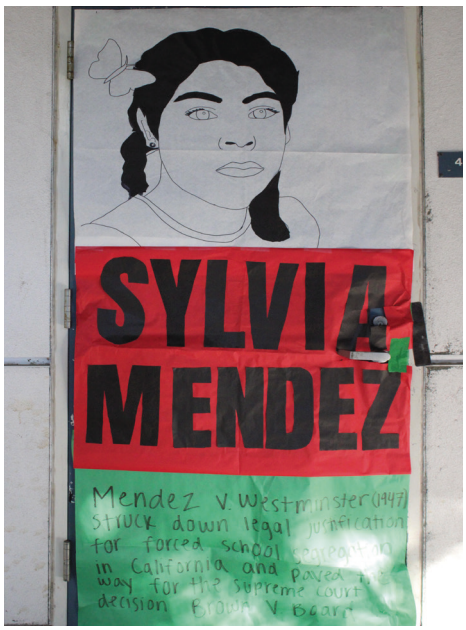
Latinos Unidos and Holland hosted a Zumba class at lunch on Sept. 25. Zumba is an energetic dance style that combines Latin music and cardio

"[LatinX Heritage Month] gives people a new perspective to respect [others' heritage], because it might not be part of your culture, but it's part of somebody else's culture," Latinos Unidos Vice President and senior Miriam Trejo said.

Door Decorations

Each year for LatinX Heritage Month, teachers decorate their doors with student-made LatinX-themed covers. These displays aim further than aesthetics by teaching students about LatinX culture.

"We have teachers doing door decorations. They can show different aspects of Latin culture or just even famous people and have fun facts about them. So as people walk by, they learn something new," Trejo said.



Introducing the New AUHSD Student Board Representatives

The District welcomes six 2024-2025 student board representatives

Maddie Obertello and Mila Ellis | Staff Writers

As board members gather to discuss the school year in full swing, eyes turn to youthful student voices to provide critical insight.

Each year, schools in the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) select six students to represent the student body, report on school events within the District, and engage in discussion during AUHSD Governing Board meetings. Those interested in becoming an AUHSD Governing Board representative applied through site-unique application processes.

Those interested in the application process should meet specific criteria, playing a role in representing their entire student body. This goes into consideration when choosing representatives at each school.

Students who participate in the Governing Board meetings have one of two roles: student board representatives, who participate solely in the school events section of the meeting, and the student board member, who oversees the entire meeting and engages in discussions on all topics. Regardless of their role's scale, student board representatives actively demonstrate community leadership and work to display unity across the District.

"[A good representative is] someone who tries to represent all voices and many perspectives, not just the perspective of the leadership class or their friends or things like that but tries to represent a broad perspective of experiences at the school and activities at the school," AUHSD Superintendent Dr. John Nickerson said.

Rianna Islam

Las Lomas senior Rianna Islam became an AUHSD student representative her junior year before returning again as a representative for the 2024-2025 school year. The application process included a questionnaire and interviews with her leadership teacher and principal, before she ultimately received reappointment out of a pool of nearly thirty applicants. Islam's involvement within Las Lomas translates to the fulfillment of her role as a representative.

"On campus, I am the ASB Vice President so I oversee a lot of the work leadership does for the school. In my position, I am able to provide a different 'behind the scenes' perspective to the board as the student representative. I also participate in our Speech and Debate program which allows me to give some insight into what student life with a certain group of students is like," Islam said.

Islam's main priority is to use her position to make a positive impact on the community.

"I hope to continue helping our district move toward an inclusive and equitable future," Islam said.

Heloisa Mateus

Acalanes senior Heloisa Mateus became a student representative after being selected as the Associated Student Body (ASB) Public Relations Officer. Her role depends on being updated on student activities on campus to best reflect the Acalanes student body in governing board meetings.

"I would say I have a lot of influence in [governing board] meetings as I am the only [student] who's a part of the Acalanes community who speaks during them," Mateus said.

As a student representative, Mateus only speaks on behalf of Acalanes rather than the District. Her role recognizes all student life and activities across campus and requires her to be aware of the events within the Acalanes community. Mateus hopes to use her position to be a uniting voice for all students amidst the large range of interests and diversity within Acalanes.

"[I make] sure to represent all students and [event-hosting] groups like leader-

Courtesy Photo/Audrey Tugade

AUHSD student Board representatives Kira Klingler (ACIS), Ryan Loughran (MHS), Arnav Misra (MHS), Nidhi Pradeep (CHS), Rianna Islam (LLHS), and Heloisa Mateus (AHS) are at a meeting.

ship, sports, [and] performing arts," Mateus said.

Kira Klinger

After a recommendation from her leadership advisor, the Acalanes Center for Independent Study (ACIS) principal selected senior Kira Klingler's as an AUHSD student representative. According to her principal, Klingler is an exemplary representative of her school, collaborating closely with students and staff to ensure that everyone's views on the school environment are heard and valued.

"I am a part of leadership and always help with whatever events or plans we have, and coordinate with staff for things to report to the board," Klingler said.

Focused on campus events, Klingler is highly involved with leadership events at ACIS. Klingler dedicates significant time to creating announcements for student board meetings, ensuring her reports effectively represent and unify the entire ACIS community through her research and involvement in events.

"My biggest goals are probably improving my reports, ... my public speaking skills, and [my] ability to give those reports," Klingler said.

Nidhi Pradeep

As the Campolindo student board representative, Nidhi Pradeep's position is connected to the Campolindo leadership class and requires a unique interview application. Unlike any other school in the AUHSD, Pradeep applied for a role in Campolindo leadership as well as the governing board, with both her school principal and leadership teacher selecting her. As the school year starts, Pradeep learns what the role entails and how to represent her school best.

"I will compile a list of everything going on, write my board report, and then I'll take it to my principal. Then we will go over it and chat about it and he will tell me anything that I missed. It is also super informative for him because sometimes there are little things that just fall through the cracks. Then I will take that board report, I'll edit it after I talk to him, and I'll take it to the board meetings," Pradeep said.

Campolindo's active student life often leads to dynamic afternoons of on campus events and club meetings. Pradeep strives to represent the entirety of Campolindo students and reflect the student body's wide range of interests.

"For me, I want to make sure that I'm including everything that is going on at campus. I think because we are such a lively campus it is easy to let things fall through the cracks," Pradeep said.

Arnav Misra

Miramonte senior Arnav Misra's role as an AUHSD student board member differs from those of the student representatives. Misra attends all board meetings and stays for the entire session, whereas school representatives leave after presenting their board reports. Representing the entire district, Misra went through two rounds of interviews before eventually gaining the selection for this position. He recognizes the importance of his voice and makes himself open for all students to voice their opinions through him.

"[I] remain available for students ... to bring concerns or ideas to my attention," Misra said.

Misra's goals as a board member go beyond his voice and include the ideals of a better school environment for all students. With many students voicing their concerns to him, Misra recognizes many areas for improvement he hopes to accomplish or set in action.

"[I] aim to work toward initiatives that improve the academic and social experience for students, helping them achieve their full potential while fostering a safe and welcoming environment," Misra said. "Whether it's addressing mental health resources, extracurricular opportunities, or improving student-teacher relations, I hope to play a part in ensuring that all AUHSD students have the tools and support they need to thrive."

Blueprint *contacted Ryan Loughran, Miramonte Governing Board Representative, for an interview, but Loughran did not respond to the request.*

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News Briefs

"Breaking Down the Walls" Returns to Acalanes

Jack Gebhardt | Head Copy Editor

One of the unique experiences for Acalanes students is "Breaking Down the Walls" (BDTW), a national program that Phil Boyte founded over 30 years ago that allows students to connect with and support their peers by sharing personal stories or hardships. The program aims to spread the message: "It's hard to hate someone whose story you know."

The program travels across the country to different schools and organizations, offering a full day of dynamic activities designed to foster unity and connection among students. Acalanes last hosted the program in the fall of 2022 at the Chris Huber Memorial Gym, coming back for the first time since the pandemic.

At Acalanes, sophomores and juniors partake in the day's events together. In 2022, the administration assigned students to one of three days where the school excused them from class to participate in BDTW.

This year's anticipated BDTW is scheduled for Oct. 22, 23, and 24 and has many excited for its return. Seniors, many of whom participated in BDTW as sophomores in 2022, will have the opportunity to lead the experience as facilitators.

Equity Council Kickoff

Maddyx Bride | Head Copy Editor

Principal Eric Shawn and Equity Council members held the first Equity Council meeting of the 2024-2025 school year in the morning on Friday, Sept. 27.

Presidents of affinity groups on campus, such as the Black Student Union (BSU), Feminism Club, and Queer Straight Alliance (QSA), make up the council alongside their teacher advisors. The goals include garnering schoolwide student involvement in the council, encouraging affinity clubs to take advantage of available funds and resources, and including diverse student voices in administrative measures across campus.

For their first meeting, the group focused on developing objectives for the 2024-2025 school year.

The group plans on meeting quarterly throughout the school year, with their next meeting on Nov. 7. In the meantime, the affinity clubs will continue to meet regularly, open to students who want to join.

DEIB Debriefs

Zinnia Khan | DEIB Director

Hello and welcome to issue two of DEIB Debriefs! My name is Zinnia Khan, and I'm a senior at Acalanes with a passion for exploring Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) on campus. This issue, I took a look at Acalanes' celebrations of Mid Autumn Festival, as well as the historical and educational significance of Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Mid-Autumn Festival:

Mid-Autumn Festival falls on Sept. 17 this year, and is a holiday dedicated to celebrating the moon. Family reunions as well as traditional foods, activities, and events characterize the holiday that countries across Asia celebrate. The Mid Autumn Festival always falls on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunisolar calendar, meaning that the date on the solar calendar varies each year.

Acalanes students celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival in many ways across campus. In Mandarin classes spanning Mandarin 1 all the way through AP Mandarin Language and Culture, students made mooncakes, known as yue bing in Mandarin. The rice-flour and red bean dessert symbolize respect for the moon, as well as unity and wholeness. Students appreciate the cultural immersion that the activity provided them with.

"I think it's important to learn about other cultures, and I think celebrating Mid Autumn Festival is a great way to do that in Mandarin Class, and I think it's a lot of fun to make Moon Cakes," senior Camille Bradley said.

In an effort to foster widespread recognition of the multicultural holiday on campus, the Acalanes Asian Student Union (ASU) held a potluck on September 27th where members of all Asian student affinity groups contributed ceremonial dishes.

"The importance of including the diversity of Asian clubs and student unions for the mid autumn festival potluck is to foster inclusivity within the festival itself. The festival is not just celebrated by one culture, and to help bring the event to life asu wanted to include other cultural clubs to participate," ASU President Hayley Takeshima said.

Indigenous Peoples' Day:

Indigenous Peoples' Day, frequently known as Columbus Day, falls on Oct. 14 this year. The holiday, initially intended to commemorate explorer Christopher Columbus' landing in the New World, falls on October 12.

However, in 1992, the city of Berkeley, Calif. made the first switch to recognizing the holiday as Indigenous Peoples' Day, pioneers in a movement that has spread across the United States. Recognizing the holiday as Indigenous Peoples' Day is an effort to commemorate the contributions and sacrifices of Indigenous Americans that occurred as a result of European settlement in the 15th century.

"The idea is to acknowledge contributions of Indigenous people, and essentially people that were on the land prior to the current demographic distribution of the United States ... and I think it's important for students at Acalanes to understand a diverse range of perspectives," Advanced Placement US History and Government and Economics teacher Adam Garcia said.

Acalanes aims to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day through a curriculum designed to educate students about the true nature of American settlement and settler relationships with Native Americans.

"I don't think you can teach us history without talking about relations between, initially, colonial settlers and indigenous people," Garcia said.

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Feature

Funding Futures for Tomorrow

How California budget measures may impact the community

Shiraz Kamran and Gwyneth Lee | Staff Writers

As the weather gets colder and settles into fall, election season fills the air. While the leaves change color, California voters read over their voter information guides and mentally weigh the pros and cons of each proposition and measure.

California voters will vote on Proposition 2 and Proposition 5 on the November 2024 ballot, which proposes a 10 billion dollar bond for school facility improvements and a way to increase local borrowing to fund affordable housing, which could change a California constitutional amendment.

Propositions 2 and 5 are only two of ten propositions that California citizens will be voting on this Election Day. Other propositions on the ballot cover various topics, ranging from increasing criminal penalties to issuing multi-billion dollar bonds.

"The reason that bonds have to go out on the ballot and be voted on is because they're loans. A bond basically says we, the people, will pay back the amount of money covered by this bond. And the person who has this bond gets to go out to the banks and say we get the money, and then it's paid off by the taxpayers," Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Governing Board member Nancy Kendzierski said.

California's ballots are unique compared to other states. It is one of few cases of a direct democracy, where voters have the responsibility to make decisions on legislation that would typically be left to local or state government officials. Additionally, any California citizen can draft and submit a proposal proposition.

"The first thing that you do is you write out your proposal, your proposition, and you submit it to ... the elections office in Sacramento. If they approve the language, then you have to go and you have to get [a certain number of] signatures from California voters," World History and Government teacher Kristen Anderson said.

According to *Ballotpedia*, Proposition 2 intends to support schools by requiring the state government to cover 50 to 55 percent of construction project costs and 60 to 65 percent of modernization costs.

"Proposition 2 is a statewide bond that is going to help to generate revenue to help pay for school facilities across the state. If passed, [it] will generate about 10 billion dollars that will go into K-14," AUHSD Business Services Associate Superintendent Nick Carpenter said.

Bonds can support Acalanes and other schools by paying for repairs for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, or roof replacement and renovations. The district received its last bond of 11 million dollars in 2008 through a local ballot and was only eligible to qualify again now in 2024, sixteen years later. However, as the AUHSD is low on the list of schools applying for a new bond, it is unlikely that Acalanes will qualify for extra funding if this bond is passed.

"Once you become eligible, you basically apply, and then you're in line to be reviewed. So it's kind of a first come, first serve basis unless there is a major area of need. Where there's an emergency situation ... and the district can't fund that, then those emergencies will jump the line. But for standard modernization, where there's not an emergency situation, it's a first come, first serve," Carpenter said.

Yet, Acalanes still benefits if the proposition passes, as the district as a whole would receive more bond money.

An important detail of Proposition 2 is that it requires the receiving school district to match the funds. This means that in order to qualify for the money from the state, a district would have to raise money, either by an increase in local taxes, local bonds, or donations for example.

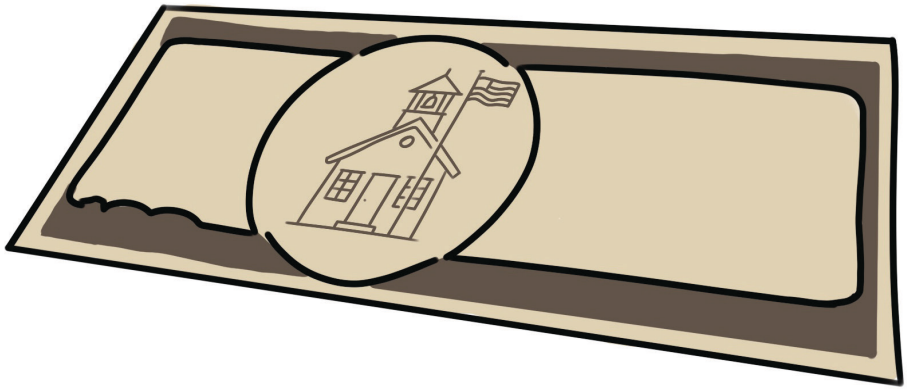
"[A potential problem is that] for lower-income communities, more taxes are going to hurt [local residents more]," said junior Elias Fretwell.

This has caused certain groups to question whether the proposition is progressive enough. Some believe that Proposition 2 would not be as helpful to communities that are more in need of funding.

Public interest law firm *Public Advocates* voiced their concerns about the bill that created Proposition 2, and suggested the current matching system for the modernization funds should be replaced by a sliding scale. They acknowledge that there is a need for the bond, but believe it is not equitable enough for less privileged communities.

"The needier students are going to continue to be going to schools that are unsafe and unhealthy, and not modern while other students have the opposite experience. We're taking a neutral stance, we understand schools need money and there's a lot of schools across the state who need it, but we're concerned that the students that are the neediest are not gonna get the support from this proposition that other districts are gonna get," *Public Advocates* Senior Staff Attorney Jetaun Stevens said.

Statistics show that the match system has contributed to a large percent-



Blueprint Graphic/Justin Rosenblatt

age of funding for schools, although primarily for wealthier school districts. University of California Berkeley's *Cite and Schools* research reveals that over the past 25 years, California's 60 percent match system has provided four times as much in state bonds to wealthy districts than less privileged districts.

The funding for this bond can come from multiple places. One option is for the state to recycle debt by selling more bonds. A portion of taxpayers' property bills would fund the bond. The Proposition 2 bond would result in taxpayers paying 31 billion dollars back over 35 years. Citizens often agree to pay for these bonds because it can be considered an investment.

"[If the Proposition is passed] I'm gonna let California borrow my money for five years, and in return, I'm gonna get [a certain amount of] interest," Anderson said. "If I buy a 35 year bond from California, I let California hold onto my investment for 35 years, I'm gonna get a lot greater interest."

On the other hand, Proposition 5 would allow for easier acquisition of funding for infrastructure and housing relief.

According to the *Legislative Analyst's Office*, Proposition 5 is the California Legislature's proposal to change a constitutional amendment. If passed, the proposition would lower the voting requirement to approve local general obligation bonds, for housing assistance and public infrastructure, from two-thirds to 55 percent. As an amendment, it would require local governments to take specific steps to monitor the use of bond funds.

Proposition 5 would have two main fiscal effects. The first effect is the amendment's lower voter approval requirement which makes it easier for certain local general obligations to pass. The second fiscal effect is an increase in funding available for housing assistance and public infrastructure.

Proposition 5 works in tandem with Proposition 2 because it allows for easier requirements to pass new bonds and get money for infrastructure repairs. The importance of lowering the supermajority means that in the future, it will be much easier to obtain funding for public infrastructure projects.

"Investing in the future of my community is an incredibly important investment and the return on that investment is invaluable," Contra Costa Community College District Chancellor Mojdeh Mehdizadeh said.

When using bonds, the state is taking into account the fact that they will have to be paid back later, possibly affecting students in the future.

"[Proposition 2] does affect us [students]. You know, we'll ... be paying that money back, but in the long run, that'll affect us more and it'll affect our education, so I think it's important for us to give our opinion," Fretwell said. "What ... parents are voting on is going to impact [our] school and it's also [students who are] going to be the ones picking up that [bond] later."

Blueprint Graphic/Cade McAlister

California citizens have the ability to vote directly on topics which is a privilege unique to our state. While voting can be an opportunity to make changes in various spheres, it can also be underutilized if there is lack of participation. Given that these Propositions have long term impacts it is relevant that young voters take action and participate.

"The voting turnout is low, especially in the younger age and in Contra Costa County with about 19 percent of registered voters actually voting, from the ages of 18 to 25," sophomore Claire Statton said.

The low percentage of voters may be the result of the complexity and depth of the topics covered, making it difficult for voters to understand the presented propositions. The wording of the propositions and measures may have too many legal terms, and gaining a proficient understanding of the arguments for each side can be difficult.

"Measures can be very technical and [have] legal jargon, and sometimes it's hard for voters to determine what the crux of the issue is. That's where the arguments for and the arguments against [an issue listed in voter guides] come into play, where groups of people or voters can submit a plain language, trying to tell voters this is what [your] vote means," Contra Costa County Assistant Registrar of Voters Helen Nolan said.

Many voters look to voter information guides to inform themselves about how different measures and propositions impact their lives and how the state and local governments distribute and will distribute their tax dollars.

"The voter information guide that comes from the county is going to be as nonpartisan and straightforward as is available to the regular voter. The candidates' statements are directly from the candidates' mouths. This is information, and we're going to give you this information in a straight and straightforward format that hopefully is as easy to read as we can make it," Nolan said.

Certain sources may also harbor a bias, only detailing the argument they support. Voting guides are used as an opportunity for voters to get an overview of the topics and both sides of the argument.

"If you vote yes [on a particular measure], you're going to increase your taxes, for example. Or if you vote no, then they [may] want you to know that voting no takes away money from schools. [This information comes] from advocates and people who support or are against some of those measures," Nolan said.

Some people feel that the voters guide is not enough to gain a sufficient understanding. The simplification of information for a better general understanding of the concepts may come at the expense of a deeper understand-

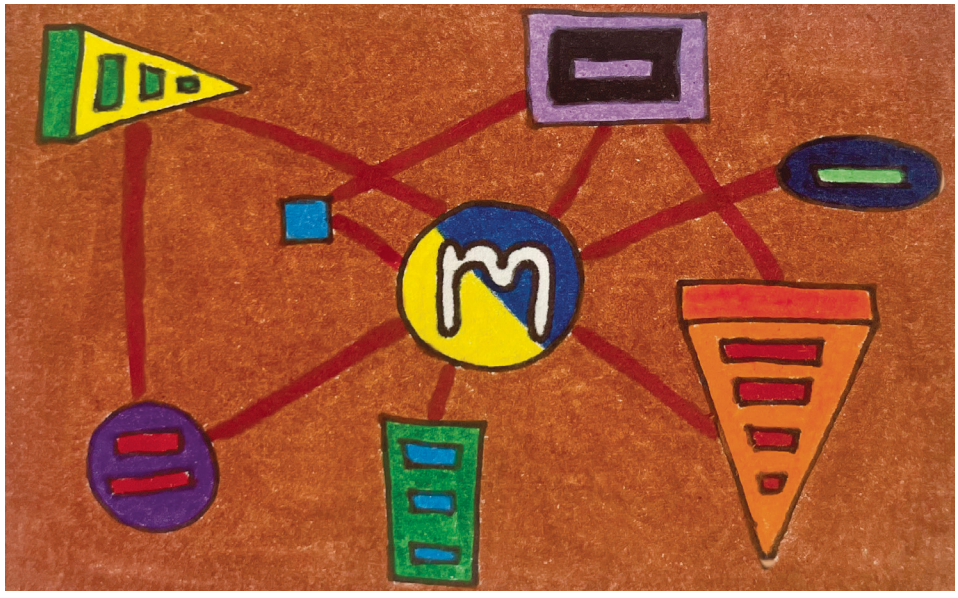
Continued on 14

Feature

Navigating the College Maze

A deep dive into the college admissions process

Sophie Gold, Jenna Kessler, Mika Katznelson, and Natalie Pecci | Business Managers and Staff Writers



Blueprint Graphic/Sof Cerruti

Navigating post-high school pathways can feel like navigating through a never-ending maze. At times, one can feel lost with no clear direction forward. However, with the right guidance and information, this journey can become much easier.

Blueprint explores the different options for post high school education pathways, the college admissions process, and changes to applications and college researching tools such as Maia Learning.

The college application process can be a long, complicated process for some that varies depending on where, when, and how students apply. While the process is different for each applicant, researching schools, writing essays, participating in extracurriculars, and taking standardized tests, are some of the common elements involved.

Students have many post-high school education options within the California education system including the California Community Colleges such as Diablo Valley College (DVC) which has campuses in Pleasant Hill and San Ramon.

"Tuition at community colleges is usually significantly lower compared to four-year institutions, making them a more affordable option for many students. DVC goes even further by offering a free tuition program to qualifying students," Interim DVC Senior Program Coordinator Sara Proctor said.

Attending a California community college can also allow students to use the Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) program after meeting campus-specific requirements.

"My own son did the TAG program, and spent his first two years at DVC and transitioned to [University of California Santa Barbara] (UCSB), where he made his lifelong friends and got a job right out of UCSB. As a parent, I really appreciated college being free for two years and felt the professors and the quality of education at DVC was very strong," Acalanes College and Career Center Advisor Debbie Levy said.

Other students apply to California State Universities (CSUs), a public four-year university system. CSUs offer many hands-on opportunities for students and the application is often considered to be more simple than others.

"California State Universities [are] a system of 23 public universities in California focusing on undergraduate education with some graduate programs," Miramonte High School College and Career Advisor Sara Bretthauer said.

Many students also attend one of the ten public, four-year institutions in the University of California (UC) system. UC schools provide a range of different majors and experiences for students.

"The UC system was predominantly developed as a research institution, funded by the state government, and they also have funding opportunities from the federal government," Levy said.

In addition to the colleges within the California system, there are many other types of schools such as liberal arts schools and out-of-state private schools.

"Liberal arts colleges focus on undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences, emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills. Private colleges [and] universities [are] funded through tuition and private contributions, often with smaller class sizes and more personalized education," Bretthauer said.

Researching and interacting with colleges is an important step for students making informed decisions about their future education. To aid students in this process, Acalanes hosts various college admissions counselors throughout the fall to help students explore different options.

"We will probably end up with 150 to 200 colleges visiting our campus this fall to answer questions, provide highlights and an insight into student life and opportunities, and walk through the admissions process and what they are looking for," Acalanes Counselor Susan Martin* said.

The representatives who visit Acalanes and other high schools also evaluate applications, making meetings with the representatives potentially beneficial in the admissions process.

"Connecting with the representative

on a personal level really is an asset to the student who is applying. There are many schools who actually track demonstrated interest, so attending a college visit for some schools can be an instrumental part of the application journey," Levy said.

While information sessions can help students learn about the school, many find that visiting the college is one of the best ways to become familiar with the school's culture and campus.

"The best thing that you can do is visit ... look at the campus, ask questions to your tour guides about their experiences, try the food from the dining hall, and figure out whether this is a place where you could feasibly spend the next four years," senior Julia Kinion said.

Applications for every school differ and there are varying types of deadlines depending on a student's commitment to the school.

"[Early decision] means if you are accepted to that school, you will attend that school no matter what. It is considered a binding contract," Martin said. "Early [action is] very popular with students because they find out sooner about college acceptances and have more time to make their final decision."

For most students however, regular decision is the most commonly planned application deadline. For many colleges, this deadline is around the beginning of January.

"Regular decision deadlines provide additional time in the fall to apply, [but] they don't leave a lot of time to make a decision in the spring," Martin said.

Once students know what colleges and deadlines they are aiming for, they can start filling out their applications, which vary from school to school.

The UCs have a unique application process that requires grades, personal insight questions, and an activities list.

"The [UC] system requires applicants to answer four out of eight prompts, and each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words, focusing on personal experiences and achievements. They are like an interview on paper," Bretthauer said.

A large portion of post-high school institutions are on the Common Application, while other schools opt for the Coalition Application.

"[The] Common Application [is] a standardized application used by many colleges, allowing students to apply to multiple schools with one application. [The] Coalition Application [is] similar to the Common [Application]," Bretthauer said.

Many applications have an extracurriculars section and allow colleges to gain additional insight to the applicants life experiences.

"Extracurriculars are a great way to learn additional life lessons that make you a well-rounded person, not just a student. They showcase to colleges that you engage in your community, manage your time well, and have goals for yourself beyond just doing well in school," Martin said.

For the majority of applications, students must write essays. While the prompts vary, students use their essays as an opportunity to present themselves to the admissions officials at the schools they are applying to. To get an outside perspective who have watched them develop, some seniors turn to their English teachers for help writing their essays.

"Seniors will come to my Academy to have me look over their essays. Sometimes they'll have me brainstorm with them things to write about or they'll talk to me about colleges that they think fit for them," Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition and English 1 teacher Erin Barth said.

Another resource available to students on campus is the College and Career Center which can help students at every stage of the college application process.

"We have a College and Career Center with a full-time advisor, Debbie Levy, who meets with students individually to help them build a list of schools based on their interests and priorities, and runs application academies," Martin said. "She also provides help with essay writing and plans all the college visits in the fall. She helps with ... scholarships as well."

This year, Acalanes transitioned from using Naviance to Maia Learning, a platform that allows students to research colleges, sign up for college visits, manage letters of recommendation, and more. Although Acalanes historically used Naviance in the past, the platform wdid not meet the Acalanes Union High School District's (AUHSD) expectations, prompting the switch to Maia Learning.

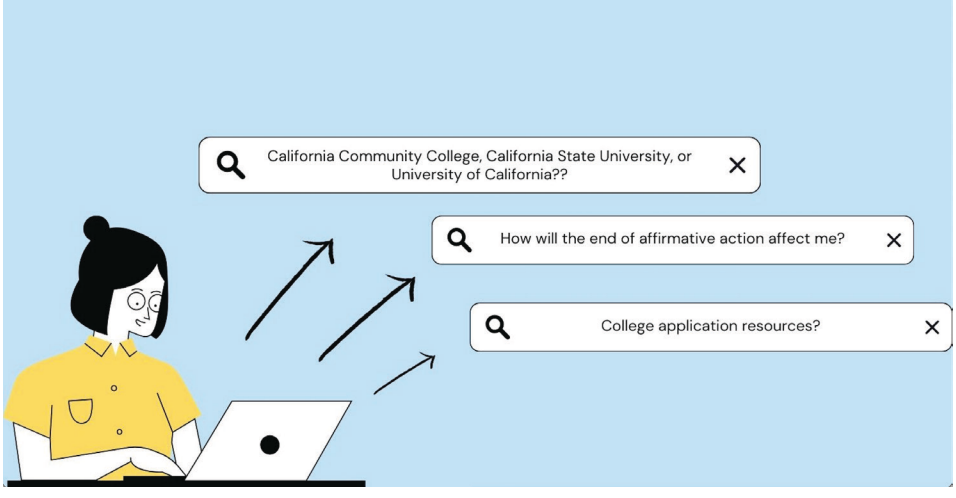
"[Naviance's] system was just kind of old, hadn't been updated in the way of a lot of systems or kept up to date and just not extremely user friendly on the back end especially," AUHSD Educational Services and Technology Director Mary Rodriguez said.

With the difficulties with Naviance, the AUHSD decided to switch its platform to Maia Learning to provide students with a more updated college and career research platform.

"Maia Learning has an updated user interface and they have a really good customer service so we can contact somebody [and] get responses very quickly," Rodriguez said.

Taking standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT can also help students set themselves apart from other applicants and help admissions officers gauge a student's academic ability.

"The SAT includes math, evidence-


California Community College, California State University, or University of California??
How will the end of affirmative action affect me?
College application resources?

Blueprint Graphic/Haley Chelemedos

based reading, and writing sections, while the ACT test consists of four sections: English, math, reading, and science," Bretthauer said. "The SAT places more emphasis on vocabulary and complex problem-solving, whereas the ACT covers a broader range of subjects and includes a science reasoning section."

In recent years, the standardized tests used for college applications have faced criticism resulting in many colleges moving to test-optional during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Part of the criticism has to do with a presumed negative impact of testing requirements on the admissions of underrepresented minority students. But there are other criticisms as well [including] the idea that tests don't predict college grades well and that they cause a lot of stress," University of Notre Dame Management and Organization Associate Professor Amanda Sharkey said.

However, as more colleges became test-optional, different problems are coming up, causing some colleges to reevaluate standardized testing once again. As a result of various factors, several colleges have begun reinstating required tests as part of the application.

"Only when groups of admitted students started to demonstrate some academic struggle and standardized test results have been able to generally predict first-year college grades with some accuracy did undergraduate programs acknowledge that the test score data point could be helpful to predict academic readiness," English teacher Anne Harris said.

Blueprint Graphic/Sof Cerruti

In addition to changes in testing requirements, colleges have adjusted other aspects of the college application process. In June 2023, the United States Supreme Court ruled that colleges can not use race or ethnicity as a factor for admissions, often referred to as affirmative action.

"At the same time, the ruling left open the possibility that colleges could consider race as one factor affecting a student's life experience. So, for example, if an applicant wrote about their experience as a member of a specific racial group in their essay, the college could take that information into consideration," Sharkey said.

While there were varying predictions about the impact of the ruling, statistics have shown the current outcome is less drastic than previously thought.

"At many selective schools, the percent of Black and [Latine] students fell, while the percent [of] white or Asian [students] increased. However, the decline was not as dire as many had predicted, and there were also a number of high-profile outlier schools that didn't fit that pattern. For example, at Yale, the percentage of Black students stayed the same," Sharkey said.

For many students, the college application process can feel like a complex maze to navigate, even with support from Acalanes teachers and resources. As students embark on this journey, their paths will diverge after high school, twisting and turning and occasionally crossing paths along the way.

"There is no right or wrong path, no path that will ensure success or failure. No path is straight either, there will be bumps, twists and turns. Sometimes you may choose the wrong path, and you will need to backtrack, pivot, or simply start over. Your life is your own, and you have time to get wherever you want to go, the journey is the best part," Martin said.

***Blueprint** would like to acknowledge that Susan Martin's daughter, Audrey Martin, is a member of* **Blueprint** *staff*.

Propositions 2 and 5

Continued from 11

ing of specific measures.

"They also send you a voting guide if you do your mail-in ballot, and that's still not enough. [There] needs to be more research and a simple Google search does work, just the stuff you get is very biased and it's hard to find both sides of issues," Statton said.

The Contra Costa County Clerk Registrar provides a voter information guide to citizens registered to vote as a way of keeping them informed. They try making the guide accessible to voters through various methods.

"The voter information guide is printed in three languages, English, Spanish and Mandarin, so every voter gets all three languages regardless of their preference. We put that version also online in a PDF format so that anyone around the county or around the state anywhere can access it digitally. We also have an accessible version. It's called our SBVG. It stands for Sample Ballot Voter Guide," Nolan said.

Having a strong understanding of what a "yes" versus "no" vote means for propositions can allow for voters to feel confident in their decisions.

"There are certain voters who will go out of their way to get good information so that they can make an informed decision and those are my favorite voters. People who are curious and really want to know what's going on do their best to seek out the matters at hand and make a decision based on where their values are best represented and reflected in the candidates that they vote for," Nolan said.

Some people believe that as the younger generation, it is important to be informed about the current legislation and bills that will be voted on.

"I would want Acalanes citizens to know ... that [with] privilege comes great responsibility, you have some really sophisticated and important laws that can affect people," Anderson said.

Many believe that the essence of participating in a democracy lies in one's ability to understand the motives and purpose behind their vote. As eligible members of the student body prepare for the upcoming election, their actions and habits now will not only impact the local community but may shape the future of the country.

"[If] you [are] in high school today, you are our future leaders. The American dream is achieved when democracy is truly in action and when our young people lead our future," Mehdizadeh said.

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Gallacher's Gist: Presenting Policy

Molly Connelly and Grace Gallacher | Print Feature Editor and Opinion Copy Editor
Spread by: Bo Chevaleau | Head of Graphics

This issue of *Gallacher's Gist* compares the positions of the Democratic and Republican presidential nominees by breaking down each stance on relevant issues based on each candidate's statements.

In Vice President Harris' speech on Sept. 25, 2024, delivered in Pittsburgh, Pa, Vice President Harris emphasized that she would govern economics pragmatically, doing what is best for the country without restraining herself with party ideology. She plans to invest 100 billion dollars in manufacturing, a major issue in Pennsylvania which is a swing state worth 19 electoral votes. Additionally, she plans to gather the funds from money obtained from taxes on multinational businesses, known as international taxes. Harris also proposed her "America Forward" plan, where she anticipates that tax credits will increase overall investment in developmental areas such as artificial intelligence, science, and clean energy development. She also seeks to minimize the amount of "unnecessary" education, mainly higher university degrees, required to work federal government jobs.

Former President Trump has a wide economic plan that would impact the power of individual citizens, the Treasury Department, and the Federal Reserve. One of Trump's major points is how he wants to implement a weaker dollar, meaning that the dollar will be worth less compared to other currencies. He expects that a weaker currency will encourage foreign countries to buy American exports and American companies to manufacture products domestically while simultaneously discouraging them from importing goods. To accomplish this, Trump will have to convince the Treasury to print more money and the Federal Reserve to increase the money supply, which causes inflation, contradicting his plan to reduce inflation. But, considering the president does not vote on monetary policies the Federal Reserve creates, this goal poses challenges.

Harris has always been outspoken on major California wildfires as a Californian herself. As California enters wildfire season, the issue may be highly relevant when it comes time for voters to cast their ballots in November. Harris gave remarks on Wildfire Resilience Funding in March 2023, in which she announced that 7 billion dollars in grants would be awarded over the next four years. She has been outspoken about her emphasis on new technology to help aid in wildfires through the use of satellite technology and other advancements. Harris's views on wildfires have also impacted how she addresses climate change. She has described the significant disturbance that droughts and wildfires led to a "deep concern" about climate change.

Trump has threatened to withhold federal wildfire aid from California if Governor Gavin Newsom does not agree to divert more water to farms, rather than allowing the water to flow to the ocean. Trump claims that California could adjust how it manages its water supply to deal with the historically devastating impacts of wildfires. Newsom responded by stating that Trump "just admitted he will block emergency disaster funds to settle political vendettas." Trump has historically disagreed with California's water management, arguing with California leaders in 2019 about the best use of water resources as it relates to farmland. However, Trump's real natural disaster plans, including California fires, for his current campaign are unclear.

Harris hopes to tighten control over the border. Her goal is to minimize and close loopholes in the asylum system. She would do this through the Bipartisan Border Security Bill, or Bill S.4631, which would give her, as the President of the United States, more authority to close the border when crossings are high. However, Harris has stated that family separation at the border is "human rights abuse." As for undocumented immigrants who currently reside in our country, Harris speaks about how they would gain "an earned pathway to citizenship," yet she has not yet elaborated on what those steps would entail. Harris has highlighted that in order to work on reforms such as a pathway to citizenship, border security needs improvement.

If elected, Trump aims to continue building his infamous wall and to begin "mass deportation." Adjusted to 2023 inflation, the wall will cost around 21.5 billion dollars, yet studies from Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University reveal that border walls, including the Trump Wall, are unlikely to reduce illegal immigration or movement of contraband, such as drugs, effectively. If Trump follows through on his Mass Deportation plan, it could aid American unemployment and open over one million jobs. But since these jobs are primarily in agricultural fields or textile factories it is unlikely that they will all be filled in time to meet the growing demand. In the past, Trump's campagins have utilized immigration as a signature issue, and this seems to continue to be true.

Local Government Briefs

Sameed Marco and Saaj Shah | Online Content Manager and Online Editor
Spread by Justin Rosenblatt | Senior Graphics Editor

City Council

The Lafayette City Council held its bimonthly meetings on Sept. 9. and Sept. 24. The public can access the meeting's minutes, agenda, and audio on the City of Lafayette website, and the Council posts a livestream of the meeting on the City of Lafayette's Youtube channel. Community members can also virtually join the meeting on Zoom through the city website. For both meetings, the council opened with a closed session followed by public comments.

During the meeting on Sept. 9, Mario Disprico announced he will be running for Lafayette City Council and Linda Deschambault announced she will be running for East Bay Regional Park District Ward 2.

After public comments, City Manager Niroop Srivatsa gave an update on all city departments including an incentive program for accessory dwelling units in Lafayette built within 18 months. Additionally, Corrina Gould from Sogorea Te' Land Trust gave a presentation on East Bay indigenous history and work by the Trust toward land rematriation.

The council held their second bimonthly meeting on Sept. 24. The public comments largely surrounded Measure H, a sales tax proposed to maintain the city services.

Measure H will be on the Nov. 5 ballot and is a half-cent or 0.5 percent tax. Many of the commenters felt that the city should look to other sources of revenue such as selling property or reducing spending first.

Finally, Tom Adams from Avenue Insights and Analytics presented on the current state of the sales tax. He concluded that the sales tax was impacted by the trends in tax statewide and that restaurants and retailers primarily drive sales tax. Adams predicted that tax would rise at a moderate pace.

Governing Board

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Governing Board met on Sept. 11, 2024. The AUHSD website contains recordings of all the meetings which are viewable by the public. The meeting opened with public comments, and after Acalanes Education Association (AEA) Lori Tewksbury reported on recent campus events.

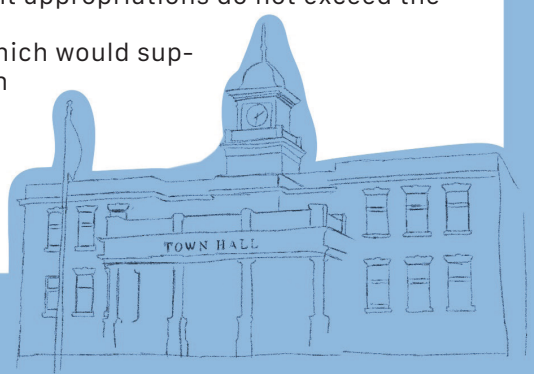
Student representatives from each school reported on their campuses' back-to-school activities, highlighting events like Homecoming preparations, spirit weeks, and community-building efforts. They emphasized student enthusiasm for reconnecting and participating in these traditions.

The Governing Board then adopted a resolution recognizing Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 as Latine and Hispanic Heritage Month. The month will celebrate the contributions and culture of Latine and Hispanic Americans.

The Governing Board also adopted Resolution No. 24-25-05, recognizing October as Bullying Awareness Month and the annual Gann Limit resolution, which limits the growth of government spending based on population and inflation factors. As the district's current appropriations do not exceed the Gann Limit no special action was required.

Additionally, the Board will consider Resolution No. 24-25-07 which would support California State Proposition 2, a 10 billion dollars bond act on the Nov. 5 ballot aimed at modernizing and repairing K-12 public schools, community colleges, and career technical education facilities.

The meeting concluded with a final adjournment following any necessary closed-session discussions and public comments.



Growing *Greener*: LAMORINDA SUSTAINABILITY

Diving into Lamorinda's sustainable measures and practices

Jenna Kessler, Mika Katznelson, and Cypress Reid | Business Manager and Staff Writers

Photos by Justin Rosenblatt, Audrey Martin, Cade McAlister, Neve Murphy | Senior Graphics Editor, Heads of Photography, and Print Opinion Editor

Spread by Maya Agarwal | Print Editor-in-Chief

From the world's first carbon-zero roadmap to the United States' first Green Building codes, CALGreen, California leads global sustainable initiatives. Blueprint explores how the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) strives to fulfill these efforts.

At Acalanes, staff and students promote sustainability around campus through educational events, waste sorting, solar panels, and gardens. However, a lack of proper waste sortment, student mindfulness, and conscious purchasing persists, prompts the Lamorinda community to continue making efforts towards improving sustainable practices.

From running the air conditioning to lighting the classrooms, buildings on campus consume large amounts of energy. To mitigate the consequences, rooms include energy-saving systems.

"A lot of the classrooms have motion-sensitive lights so the lights go out when there are no people in the room. Having all of our thermostats on timers set by the district also means we won't be heating or cooling any empty rooms and things like that," Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science, Ethnic Studies, and Human and Social Development teacher Jada Paniagua said.

Safe and reduced energy regulation extends outside of the school's indoor facilities. In 2017, the district installed solar panel arrays in the parking lots of all four highschools. The panels, heating Acalanes' pool and locker room, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 4,000 metric tons, according to Sun Earth's case study of the Acalanes High School Solar Project.

"These panels, which are owned, maintained, and operated by Tesla, provide the district with a discounted rate on PG&E services," AUHSD Director of Facilities Tommy Rodriguez said.

As food waste becomes an increasing national concern, the AUHSD holds policy aimed to regulate daily waste. California Senate Bill (SB) 1383 requires educational facilities to provide educational materials to associated members and report waste activity to their local jurisdiction, frames this policy.

"All meals are carefully tracked by our [point of sale] system. This is one of the reasons students scan their ID card," AUHSD Food Service and Safety Coordinator Rebecca Ward said. "Reports are run at the end of each day which tell us exactly how many breakfasts before school, brunches, and lunches are eaten by students everyday. This tool helps the leads decide the number of meals to serve each day."

"[SB 1383] requires all schools to separate their organics to compost wherever compostables and recycles are generated, so in eating areas mostly. It is a requirement to have those containers, those three bins, and to have proper signage. It is a requirement to educate the students and staff every year," RecycleSmart K-12 Sustainability Coordinator Amanda Halte said.

To minimize food waste, the AUHSD monitors student traffic in the cafeteria to gauge the demand of meals per day. From this, the cafeteria aims to prepare only as much food as students need.

"All meals are carefully tracked by our [point of sale] system. This is one of the reasons students scan their ID card," AUHSD Food Service and Safety Coordinator Rebecca Ward said. "Reports are run at the end of each day which tell us exactly how many breakfasts before school, brunches, and lunches are eaten by students everyday. This tool helps the leads decide the number of meals to serve each day."

The District partners with White Pony Express (WPE), a local nonprofit organization that redistributes excess food to those in need, per California's requirement to have a food donation partner.

"[AUHSD] generally uses [WPE] when [it] has events to pick up extra food. We give them a heads up that an event will be happening so they can easily add us to their pick-up schedule," Ward said. "If there is a large [amount of] food leftover at the end of

a random school [day] ... the food is properly cooled and then [WPE] will pick [it] up the next convenient day for them."

RecycleSmart, an organization that provides solid waste management for Central Contra Costa County, partners with Acalanes to help manage the school's waste diversion rates. Diversion rates are the percentage of solid waste going into the compost or recycling instead of the landfill.

"When [RecycleSmart] started working with Acalanes in 2013, the diversion [rate] ... was only 19 percent. Acalanes in 2019-2020 got to 73 percent. Last year was 62 percent," Halte said.

On-campus organizations also play a role in improving Acalanes' sustainability through education and the promotion of eco-friendly practices. The Acalanes Sustainability/Garden Club helps to promote eco-friendly practices by maintaining gardens on campus.

"[The Sustainability/Garden Club] essentially just cultivates a nice place for students to relax, to chill and do homework with plants you cannot necessarily eat but create a nice mindful environment," Co-President of the Sustainability/Garden Club and junior Bryce Birdsong said.

The two gardens are the farm garden and the meditation garden which encourage the Acalanes community to embrace the outdoors.

"It provides a space for students and staff to enjoy nature, pollinators, and other critters along with the plants. The farm also provides food for the club members and staff here at Acalanes," Sustainability/Garden Club Advisor Lori Tewksbury said.

Other organizations include the Acalanes Environmental Board which began the 2024-2025 school year and works to educate the student body about waste management.

"I have worked with the [Acalanes] Environmental Board, and last year we tried to lessen the amount of stations on campus. For those students who really are thinking about [it] ... they can sort and find those three-bin stations. Kids who are in a rush ... can put [their waste] in the landfill so we don't contaminate the proper sorts," Halte said.

In addition to lessening the amount of waste sorting bins on campus, the Environmental Board began the 2024-2025 school year by educating the student body about waste management.

"[The Environmental Board] created some aspects of a slideshow that was school-wide [and] was delivered during Academy. We put that together to inform the student body about picking up your trash and sorting properly," Acalanes Environmental Board Head and senior Hayley Takeshima said.

The Environmental Board also hosts educational presentations during Academy throughout the year, often featuring guest speakers and covering a range of topics.

"We host [presentations] during academy to inform students about an environmental topic of our choosing, and it's just to help broaden students' knowledge," Takeshima said.

While many see the sustainable strides that Acalanes makes, improper recycling practices and littering on campus remain as challenges.

While the school informs students about proper waste sortment, putting them in the right bins can prove to be a struggle.

"The easiest thing that we can be doing is sorting our garbage better. It requires no additional money and would in fact save the school [money]. It requires no change in habits and patterns, it's just taking your garbage and taking 30 seconds to put it in the correct bin," Paniagua said.

"The easiest thing that we can be doing is sorting our garbage better. It requires no additional money and would in fact save the school [money]. It requires no change in habits and patterns, it's just taking your garbage and taking 30 seconds to put it in the correct bin," Ethnic Studies, and Human and Social Development teacher Jada Paniagua said.

Not sorting trash into the proper receptacles adds to a larger environmental problem by contributing to green-

house gasses.

"One-third of the material going to our landfill is food scraps and soiled paper. It all can be sent to compost facilities instead. The landfills [are] the third biggest methane emission for the [United States]," Halte said. "[Proper waste sortment] not [only] decreases the methane gas, [but] we are making something new out of the food scraps ... There is also electricity that is made [by] the program that ReycleSmart and Republic Services is providing to Acalanes."

Another frustration many experience when it comes to upholding sustainability at Acalanes is a lack of complete student support.

"I've noticed that during lunch, the little lunch trays have been littered around the quads, and the trash cans are usually overflowing," frosh Noelle Dobies said.

In response to poor student etiquette, campus supervisors frequently remind students of their responsibility to help keep the campus clean.

"I think a lot of the [students] think that, now that they're in high school, someone's going to pick up after them, and it doesn't work like that. We all have to work together to keep this campus clean and sometimes I have to hammer that point home. This year, I had to give [a speech] twice. First time, I don't think they heard me very well. The second time, let's just say, I was a little more forceful in my speech, and it's gotten a little better. But it's something that we have to police, it's constant," Campus Supervisor Andy McDonald said.

Many believe the large amounts of litter in the frosh quad also creates disturbances and disrupts campus aesthetics.

"We all have to work together to keep this campus clean, and sometimes I have to hammer that point home. This year, I had to give [a speech] twice. First time, I don't think they heard me very well. The second time, let's just say, I was a little more forceful in my speech, and it's gotten a little better. But it's something that we have to police, it's constant," Campus Supervisor Andy McDonald said.

"We have increased our focus on recycling and composting. We do this by educating our students and staff, and bringing awareness to the importance of sustainable practices. We utilize presentations, Canvas, signage around campus, and social media to keep everybody informed of our goals and guidelines," Miramonte Principal Ben Campopiano said.

"I haven't seen any rats on campus, but I heard some sophomores talking about seeing one at lunch a few weeks ago. I feel like we can do so much better to prevent rats and other problems caused by littering at our school," Dobies said.

Currently, the AUHSD purchases non-recycled paper which contributes to deforestation and its consequences on the environment.

"It would be nice if the District could purchase paper made from recycled fibers for the copy machines and also for paper towels and toilet paper. I hate the idea of using trees," Tewksbury said.

Other schools in the AUHSD take steps towards creating a more eco-friendly environment. Miramonte High School implements a variety of policies and programs to publicize the necessity of sustainability efforts.

"We have increased our focus on recycling and composting. We do this by educating our students and staff, and bringing awareness to the importance of sustainable practices. We utilize presentations, Canvas, signage around campus, and social media to keep everybody informed of our goals and guidelines," Miramonte Principal Ben Campopiano said.

At Campolindo, students and staff from various spheres on campus created Team Campost, an environmental sustainability group focussed on addressing the waste sorting issue through community outreach.

"We are always looking to expand Team Campost.

Students can earn community service hours by volunteering at lunch to monitor waste sorting," Campolindo Sustainability Coordinator Justin Seligman said.

Informing students about the importance of sustainability from a young age can engrave the values and practices in their minds. At Springhill Elementary School, teachers and staff teach students about proper waste management and sorting.

"We have this group called green team where people sort out trash in the right bins," Springhill Elementary School fourth grader Zara Sainath said.

District wide, the AUHSD plans to improve their sustainability by improving education and shifting the language around sustainability across the campuses.

"We are working toward waste sorting education for students and staff and changing. This is challenging as it is a culture shift on the campuses, trying to get students to care. We are also working on drought tolerant landscaping and minimizing paper use," AUHSD Sustainability Coordinator and science teacher Emma Stransbury said.

To change the narrative surrounding sustainability, many feel more collaboration between the district and student organization will create a more green vision for the schools.

"We are working toward waste sorting education for students and staff and changing. This is challenging as it is a culture shift on the campuses, trying to get students to care. We are also working on drought tolerant landscaping and minimizing paper use," AUHSD Sustainability Coordinator and science teacher Emma Stransbury said.

"It sets an example for our students that caring for our planet should always be our priority. No matter what someone does with their life and career after high school, we all live on this earth and should be equipped with the knowledge of how to live more sustainably," Stransbury said.

"Something with high impact and cost is working with the school principal to create a vision for your school's sustainability and actually making sure that it is actually a part of your school's strategic plan," Green Schools Alliance START Program Director Kelly Harding said.

In the effort to be more eco-friendly, the district can include a variety of actions from educational presentations to more waste sorting stations.

"[Some] easy actions [are] hosting sustainability related events, making sure that every year there is, for example, a school assembly dedicated to sustainability and climate action. It could be working with teachers to ensure that sustainability is embedded in the curriculum, [so] students actually [learn] about it," Harding said.

However, making a more green campus is not solely the responsibility of one group. To create a lasting solution for a sustainable school, it takes administration, teachers, staff, students, and the wider community working together.

"It sets an example for our students that caring for our planet should always be our priority. No matter what someone does with their life and career after high school, we all live on this earth and should be equipped with the knowledge of how to live more sustainably," Stransbury said.

Zinnia Khan, DEIB Director, contributed interviews to this story.

CHICAGO TITLE
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®

Recipe of the Issue

Chai snickerdoodle cookies

Cameron Powell, Hannah Geraghty, and Zinnia Kahn | Online Editor-in-Chief, Business Manager, and DEIB Director

As the temperature drops, leaves begin to fall, and the autumn season begins, these chai snickerdoodle cookies are the perfect treat. Snuggle up for a movie or snack on them throughout the day; these cookies are soft, chewy, and spiced with a variety of warm seasonings, completed with a fluffy chai frosting on top.

Blueprint Photo/Zinnia Khan
Chai snickerdoodle cookies after baking and decorating.

Spiced Sugar Topping:
1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon chai spice

Chai Spiced Snickerdoodle Cookies:
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon chai spice
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup butter unsalted, softened to room temperature
1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
2 eggs at room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Chai Latte Buttercream:
1/2 cup butter softened
2 cups powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon chai spice
3-4 tablespoons heavy cream

Instructions:
1. Preheat the oven to 375°F, and line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, combine the granulated sugar and chai spice and set aside for later.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, cinnamon, chai spice, and salt together.
4. In another bowl, use a hand mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment to beat the butter and granulated sugar together on high speed until smooth and creamy, about two minutes.
5. Add in the eggs and vanilla extract. Beat on medium-high speed until combined.
6. With the mixer running on low speed, slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients.
7. Once combined, roll the cookie dough into balls, about two tablespoons of dough each. Before placing on the parchment-lined cookie sheets, roll the dough balls in the spiced sugar topping. Arrange three inches apart on the baking sheets. Note: they will spread.
8. Bake cookies for ten to 14 minutes, rotating the pan 180° in the oven at the six-minute mark to ensure an even bake.
9. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for ten minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.
10. In a stand mixer with a wire whisk, combine softened butter, powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and chai spice. Slowly add heavy cream one tablespoon at a time until the buttercream is soft and fluffy.
11. Frost cookies with the chai latte buttercream once they are fully cooled.

BlueTunes: Fall Edition

Blueprint's fall tunes playlist

Olivia Foster and Zoe Stafford | Head Section Editor and Azure Editor-in-Chief

As the leaves turn colors and the seasons change, the music must match the vibe. This playlist will surely set the mood for fall. Like lighting a pumpkin-spice candle whose scent fills the room, the tunes of this playlist will reverberate throughout any cozy autumn space.

Ruebner's Records

Breakout albums from emerging artists

Cole Ruebner | Contributing Writer
Spread by Justin Rosenblatt | Senior Graphics Editor

Doechii - *Alligator Bites Never Heal*
Genre - RnB/Hip-Hop

While Doechii is by no means new to the music industry, releasing a steady flow of extended plays (EPs) and singles since 2020, she did not pop up on my radar until the rollout of her first full-length project, *Alligator Bites Never Heal*. As one of the newest signees to Top Dawg Entertainment, the same label that has housed SZA, Schoolboy Q, and Kendrick Lamar at different points, Doechii brings the same raw charisma, creativity, and uniqueness that the label has come to be known for.

Although she built up much of her following through catchy, TikTok-focused tracks like "What It Is," this project takes a massive creative pivot into a far more personal territory. Doechii refers to the TikTok-focused music that she used to make negatively throughout the album, most notably on the song "DENIAL IS A RIVER," calling out specifically that her label forced her into making TikToks to further her brand.

Alligator Bites is the antithesis to her old music, far less focused on providing a cohesive and commercial-ready listen than it is on grabbing the listener's attention and saying "look what I can do." As it turns out, she can do a lot.

One of the main draws of this album is the raw personality that Doechii brings to the table. On the more rap-centered songs, she is constantly switching up her delivery to keep the listener on their toes. The voices she employs are reminiscent of her once-consignee Kendrick Lamar, albeit sacrificing his composure and focus for a more off-the-wall, manic energy. She sounds like she's having a blast rapping every word.

This shift is evident in the song "BOILED PEANUTS" which brings together wobbly jazz horn passages and punchy drums with some classy, old-school hip-hop flows. The chorus sees Doechii adopt a haunting, warbly inflection that compliments the feel of the track really well.

On the topic of standout tracks, the one that got me excited for this album was the lead single "NISSAN ALTIMA." While the beat is relatively minimalistic in nature, the flows and delivery Doechii employs are insanely catchy. She delivers line after line of rapid-fire wordplay and effortless rhyme schemes for two minutes straight, never taking her foot off of the gas.

While this album is overall an extremely solid debut, that does not mean that it comes without its faults. As I mentioned before, *Alligator Bites* far favors style and personality over cohesiveness, which is intriguing in the short term but tends to hurt the album as a complete body of work. Some tracks feel way too short, not giving nearly enough breathing room to ideas that could be really interesting if fully fleshed out. There are a few songs that just seem like they could have been scrapped completely, like the confounding "BOOM BAP," a track that sees Doechii speak nonsense for a good chunk of its runtime. It is enjoyable to see her having fun, but that enjoyment can only go so far.

Overall, while this album is not perfect, it has proved Doechii to be one of the most promising acts in hip-hop and RnB. If she continues improving her skills a bit more in the coming years she is well on her way to becoming one of the greats.

The Dare - *What's Wrong with New York?*
Genre - *House Pop/Electro*

On W*hat's Wrong With New York*, The Dare proves you can be so sleazy that you are cool. Coming off of a Charli XCX cosign and filling in a Brat-shaped hole in the music scene, The Dare synthesizes boastful dance-pop fun with outlandish industrial experimentation.

This album is impossible to pin down. It borrows elements from so many more genres than what is listed at the top of this review, from the bouncy kicks and percussion of house music to the manic, synthetic feel of hyperpop, to the abrasive noises of the industrial genre, there are so many going on with *What's Wrong With New York* that it is hard to even describe.

Continued on 29

BOOK NOOK

Reading thriller and murder mystery books for the spooky season

Spread by Cade McAlister | Head of Photography

Truly, Madly, Deadly by Hannah Jayne

Hannah Geraghty | Business Manager

"Her breath hitched and her fingers - and the note - began to tremble. Someone knew."

Hannah Jayne's novel *Truly, Madly, Deadly* combines the high school experience with classic thriller elements to create an exciting and unpredictable book. When Sawyer's boyfriend Kevin dies, she is secretly relieved, as her relationship with Kevin was not what it seemed. However, when she receives a note concerning the death that just says "You're welcome," Sawyer realizes she might be in over her head.

As Sawyer continues dealing with the fallout of Kevin's death, she also has to figure out how to survive the stalker who is slowly taking over her life. Jayne's plot is full of high stakes and increasing tension, with twists sure to keep readers guessing throughout. *Truly, Madly, Deadly* is a great read for anyone interested in a mystery to keep you guessing until the final pages.

Killers of a Certain Age by Deanna Raybourn

Zinnia Khan | DEIB Director

"Only women are ever called persnickety. Men get to be detail oriented."

Deanna Raybourn's *Killers of a Certain Age* is a riveting and refreshingly clever novel that blends dark humor, thrilling action, and poignant reflections on aging and identity. Centered around a group of retired assassins, the narrative masterfully explores themes of empowerment and resilience, showcasing how these formidable women navigate the complexities of a world that often underestimates them.

Raybourn's prose is sharp and witty, effortlessly drawing readers into the lives of her characters. Readers witness their growth, camaraderie, and undeniable strength. In *Killers of a Certain Age*, Raybourn crafted a unique narrative that resonates deeply, blending thrill with thoughtful commentary. It is a must-read for anyone seeking an exhilarating escape that also champions the power of women—and the richness of life at any age.

The Guest List by Lucy Foley

Emily Roberts | Print Feature Editor

"And I'm not worried about it being haunted. I have my own ghosts. I carry them with me wherever I go."

Lucy Foley's *The Guest List* seamlessly weaves murder, marriage, and mystery into the perfect novel that will leave readers guessing until the very end. Set on a remote Irish island, Jules and Will's lavish wedding has been meticulously planned to the very last detail. However, long-buried secrets begin to surface with the arrival of the guests. Tensions escalate as past grievances and hidden motives come unburied until someone snaps.

With the discovery of a body, everyone becomes a suspect and seemingly solid relationships unravel as readers race to piece together the truth. Told from multiple perspectives, this murder mystery carefully unveils the twisted web of events that leads up to the murder. It is a must-read for anyone seeking an unexpected ending in a thrilling autumn read.

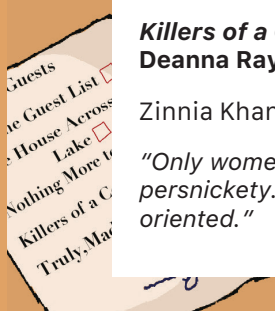
Nothing More to Tell by Karen M. McManus

Gwyneth Lee | Staff Writer

"I know that you can have the best intentions and still get the worst results."

Karen McManus' *Nothing More to Tell* explores true crime journalism, the revelation of secrets, and the dangers of the truth. When Brynn Gallagher returns to her hometown after leaving for four years, she finds out that her favorite teacher was murdered in the woods. She is determined to dive into the past and investigate the mystery.

Brynn is certain that the three students who found the body, including her ex-best friend Tripp Talbot, are hiding something so she begins to rekindle past friendships to get closer to the truth. Desperate in the pursuit of knowledge, Brynn quickly discovers secrets that go beyond the murder and reveal the truth about her own past. This story is a great read for anyone looking for a plot-twist-filled book to binge-read.



Quote of the Issue

"There is only one way to happiness and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will" - Epictetus

Jack Gebhardt | Head Copy Editor

Blueprint Graphic/Bo Chevaleau

Epictetus, the ancient Greek stoic philosopher, taught that true contentment comes from letting go of the illusion that we can control the world around us. In life, we all hold onto moments and words in our minds like invisible balloons filled with fear, expectations, and the opinions of others. These balloons constantly follow us, looming over our heads. Sometimes they block the sunlight; sometimes they act as clouds. These balloons represent the things we can not control, yet we still hold them tightly, reluctant to relinquish their weight.

The truth is, no matter how hard we try to manipulate these balloons, their burden is beyond our control. Although letting them shape our lives and confine us to a set of rules is easy, the easy route is not always the right one. Happiness is not found in trying to control the uncontrollable, it is found when we decide to let go of it.

We often struggle with things we can not control: someone's opinion, the future, or test scores. Although these factors can hold a heavy sway in our lives, Epictetus reminds us that our time is better spent on what we can control: our actions, mindset, and responses to what happens to us.

Epictetus believed accepting that what happens to you or the world can lead to happiness. Similarly, accepting your own mistakes rather than blaming them on uncontrollable external factors can lead to greater self-discovery and growth. The changes we seek can be made from within. Although some of these ideas are not fit for every situation, I agree that his theories can be applied to most of life's scenarios.

In some cases, like Kobe Bryant's with basketball, practice can help, but it will never make us perfect. Kobe was one of the greatest players in basketball history, yet Kobe had the most missed shots than any other player. However, his greatness was not defined by perfection. It was defined by persistence and his work ethic. He was always the first person on the court and last to leave, out-working all of his competition. Yet when he still missed shots and lost championship titles, he never blamed it on uncontrollable factors.

Much too often we live by the judgments and perceptions of others; those who live this way will never live a life of their own. When we let go of controlling how others perceive us, we open ourselves up to the freedom of being who we truly are. In doing so, we attract the people and experiences that align with our identity.

The Stoics believed that the universe puts things in our path to make us stronger, not defeat us. When we stop resisting the things we cannot control, we allow ourselves to grow stronger and attract greater things into our lives. Much like the concept of karma, what you put out into the universe will come back to you, so the universe will place things in front of us that match our energy.

As a child, I was taught to let go of my balloons - the grudges, anger, and frustrations with things that we can't control. When we do let go, we suddenly feel lighter, the sunlight shines through, and we can experience the world as it is, not as we wish it to be.

Artist of the Issue

Actor Bee Reinsberg is center stage during this year's fall play

Melina Galacatos and Cara Hamilton | Online Editor and Staff Writer

Senior Bee Reinsberg is an actor entering their fourth year attending drama classes at Acalanes and they have taken on leading roles both on stage and in the classroom. They have an extensive artistic background from dance classes to acting experiences at school, community theater, and summer camps.

Reinsberg's acting experience followed other artistic endeavors and began at the Lafayette Town Hall Theater when they were in first grade.

"I have always been a ballet, tap, and a jazz kid. The community theater was right across the street from my elementary school so it was always a place that I could go to after school," Reinsberg said.

Years of experience have shaped Reinsberg into a seasoned actor in the Acalanes drama department. In any rehearsal and performance cycle, their peers notice their complex understanding of the art of acting.

"Bee is intuitive and intelligent, they are an actor's actor. They are really supportive of other actors and very collaborative, just a wonderful performer," Acalanes Drama teacher Ed Meehan said.

While Reinsberg is respected for their artistic talent, they are also a friendly face and leader within the Acalanes drama community.

"They know how to connect with people and include people and when we're putting together pieces. They're someone that you can trust to have good ideas and to share those ideas and to work collaboratively and bring other people in to make an impact," Meehan said.

The collaborative aspect and sense of community in theater are what inspire Reinsberg to continue their involvement in the department.

"[My peers] always serve as such a big inspiration to me, because they always offer so much to the table and they inspire me to better my acting and expand my skill, and just keep on pursuing this," Reinsberg said.

Similar to how their fellow actors inspire Reinsberg, they return the favor by being a comforting, confident, and energetic presence in the drama room.

"They've always been someone I feel comfortable around, and someone I can rely on for anything, because also in the same drama, as well as last year, so we've worked together on projects in drama and they're kinda a go-to person," junior Everest Tomasello said.

In the Acalanes 2024 fall play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Reinsberg will play one of the leading roles, Puck.

"They're great [and excited] for the role. I'm excited about what they're doing, I can't wait to see what they come up with," Meehan said.

Over the past few years, Reinsberg has played a wide variety of characters in the productions they have been a part of, all of which have developed their skills and prepared them for the upcoming play.

"Their presence on stage comes to them so naturally that they kind of direct themself in a way, and Bee is the type of actor whose talents are so versatile, they can play pretty much play any character," Tomasello said.

Beyond the storytelling of theater, Reinsberg values the community that the art form creates.

"I want to inspire people to continue to join the acting sphere ... People have been discouraged from joining it, and I want to allow people to see that this is a safe space for people who join, even if they have never participated in it before," Reinsberg said.

In the future, Reinsberg hopes to continue participating in theater and supporting other artists.

"I just want to keep engaging by seeing shows that my friends are in, see shows on different stages, and keep this art alive," Reinsberg said.

Their classmates have faith that Reinsberg has the potential to continue their theatrical involvement and influence far into the future.

"Bee is someone I am so sure that I'm going to see on Broadway with released albums [or whatever] they want to do. I know that ten [or] 20 years from now I can say that that famous person went to my high school," Tomasello said.

Contributing Photo/Andie Patterson
Reinsberg poses in an Emerald City guard costume.

Trader Joe's: Tricks or Treats

Blueprint *reviews Trader Joe's fall items*

Levand Koopah | *Blueprint* Coordinator

Item: Pumpkin Blondie Brownies
Price: $4.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:

With a soft, chewy texture and the perfect blend of fall spices, Trader Joe's (TJ's) Pumpkin Blondie Brownies are a must-try fall item. The pumpkin flavor adds a moist, rich base, while the white chocolate chips and pecans provide a delightful contrast of sweetness and crunch. The pumpkin spice topping complements the dessert without being overwhelming, making each bite warm and comforting.

Item: Pumpkin O's
Price: $2.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁
Review:

With the perfect balance of pumpkin spice, TJ's pumpkin cereal is a delightful breakfast treat for the fall season. The pumpkin flavor shines through with hints of cinnamon and nutmeg, giving it a cozy, seasonal touch. For a low price, you are getting your money's worth. Paired with milk or enjoyed on its own, Pumpkin O's makes for a great autumn snack or morning meal.

Emily Roberts | Print Feature Editor

Item: Maple & Sea Salt Kettle Corn
Price: $2.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:

With a satisfying combination of salty and sweet, this maple kettle corn is the perfect snack to indulge any fall sweet tooth. The maple flavor, while subtle, elevates standard kettle corn by bringing in a rich flavor. Although the sweetness can become overpowering, the addition of sea salt balances the flavor and helps create a yummy autumn snack. For the ultimate fall movie night, pair this kettle corn with a cozy movie and enjoy.

Item: Pumpkin Spiced Teeny Tiny Pretzels
Price: $3.49
Rating: 🍁🍁
Review:

These pretzels are a cute fall snack with a nice crunch. The pretzels are coated with a slightly sweet pumpkin spice flavored yogurt and topped with a dusting of pumpkin seeds. However, the pumpkin spice flavor is faint and does not quite capture the autumn taste. The pumpkin seeds are also lacking in number. While these pretzels are not a stand-out

Blueprint Photo/Audrey Martin
The reviewed Trader Joe's items.

treat, this pumpkin goodie is still a solid addition to any fall food board.

Grace Wolpert | Arts Copy Editor

Item: Pumpkin and Spice Snickerdoodle Mix
Price: $3.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:
These delectable pumpkin spice snickerdoodle cookies are the perfect addition to a cozy fall day. This box makes 22 reasonably-sized cookies, perfect for sharing with family and friends. These cookies are a great alternative to the classic snickerdoodle cookie. Although these cookies were slightly drier than anticipated, they are certainly tasty. With warm spices, easy assembly, and a quick bake time, this mix is a no-brainer addition to your TJ's shopping list.

Item: Pumpkin Spice Mini Sheet Cake
Price: $5.49
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:
TJ's pumpkin spice sheet cake is a delightful seasonal treat that captures the essence of fall. This cake has a moist fluffy texture infused with pumpkin puree and warm spices like cinnamon and nutmeg. The cream cheese frosting adds a creamy sweetness that complements the spiced cake beautifully. Overall, this sheet cake is a must-try for pumpkin lovers and a perfect way to celebrate the autumn season.

Sela Sarbiewski | Staff Writer

Item: Pumpkin Ice Cream
Price: $4.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:
Imagine Thanksgiving pumpkin pie with a dollop of vanilla ice cream. The TJ pumpkin ice cream is just that but in one perfect bite. This rich and creamy treat is the perfect blend of comforting spices made cold and refreshing. Paired with cookies and cinnamon or served alone, this is a perfect autumn dessert for any occasion.

Item: Pumpkin Biscotti
Price: $3.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:
Sometimes, simple is better. Although a tad dry, these crispy pumpkin cookies are perfect for dipping into tea or just snacking on alone. The best part is that they are not too sweet and the pumpkin flavor is not overpowering. Overall, this item is great for anyone looking for a subtle fall dessert they can eat anytime.

Item: Apple Shortbread Cookies
Price: $3.49
Rating: 🍁🍁
Review:
These buttery apple cookies are perfect for dipping in tea. Although they are a bit dry and lack substantial spices to complement the apple flavor, this item is eye-catching, as the cookies are beautifully packaged in a colorful watercolor box.

Samantha Swift | Staff Writer

Item: Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese
Price: $3.79
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁🍁
Review:
The butternut squash mac and cheese is a delicious twist on classic mac and cheese with warm fall spices and a delicious butternut squash sauce. The sweetness of the butternut squash combined with the creaminess of the cheese makes for a unique and comforting dish. With the short cooking time in the microwave, it makes for the perfect meal on a rainy fall day when you need an easy but delicious meal.

Item: Pumpkin Spice Loaf
Price: $4.99
Rating: 🍁🍁🍁
Review:
This tasty treat captures the essence of fall with bold spices and pumpkin flavor. The pumpkin spice loaf makes for the perfect pick-me-up at any time of the day. The loaf itself is a bit dry but served warm with a cup of coffee or tea fixes the minor issue and creates a warm autumn spirit with every bite.

Ruebners Records

Continued from 24

One piece of this project that is undeniably great is its lyrics. Bragging is not a new concept for music, especially when it comes to something as club-centric as this, but this album takes it to a whole new level. I have gone back and forth on recommending the song "Girls," as it is lyrically heinous, but The Dare masters the ability to say such weird, outlandish phrases that it actually works in the song's favor. It is funny, irreverent, and catchy all at the same time.

Another highlight on the album is the witty dance hit, "I Destroyed Disco." The growling bass contrasts nicely with fun, danceable drums, while The Dare shouts one quotable line after another.

This album is at its best when it is experimenting and not taking itself too too seriously. It is infectiously fun and at points incredibly funny, allowing The Dare's boisterous personality to shine through in all of its glory. However, the album still has some shortcomings.

While *What's Wrong With New York* brings intoxicating highs, it stumbles a bit when it comes to the more personal, dramatic moments. Songs like "You Can Never Go Home" and "Elevation" falter with surface-level, somewhat generic lyrics, and overly dramatic instrumentation. With that being said, it would not be surprising if The Dare did come out with some really impactful, heartfelt songs in the future, but his first release shows that he does have a bit to learn in that department.

What's Wrong With New York is a thrill ride full of personality and wit, although somewhat inconsistent in its execution. All faults aside, The Dare is anything if not promising, and I can not wait to see where this artist will go in the future.

La Mode second hand styles

Aya O'Neal, Olivia Silverstein, and Will Miller | Online Content Manager and Staff Writers

Spread by Aya O'Neal | Online Content Manager

Acalanes fashionistas know the importance of shopping sustainably. From thrift store fanatics to the Depop demons, the Dons do their part to source their wardrobes sustainably.

Sustainability can elevate any wardrobe. Whether it is a vintage denim jacket found in a local thrift store or a unique piece sourced from Depop, these astute shoppers understand that second-hand treasures can transform an outfit. Just as the right accessory can take a look from basic to breathtaking, sustainable choices redefine what it means to be stylish while being kind to the planet.

"I enjoy thrifting because I get to look the way I want to while knowing that that choice is good for the environment," senior Michael Hamilton said.

Students have access to numerous locations across the Bay Area such as the Salvation Army, Goodwill, and Flea markets to thrift in person. These places serve as havens for Dons who enjoy the in-person shopping experience.

"[I] prefer going thrifting ... in person because sometimes it doesn't look the same as it is in the picture and I'm able to visualize [the clothes] and try [them] on [to] see if I actually do like it and if it fits differently from how it looks. It's also a fun experience to go in person," junior Max Martinez

There are also online platforms that serve as an alternative source for those who do not want to sift through racks. Users can buy and sell their clothes from any location, which is popular with thrifters looking to turn a hobby into a side hustle or experiment with their closet.

"[Online platforms] give people access to get clothes that they might not be able to get in person. They can shop and have it delivered to them online rather than going in person or going into a thrift store where they can't find anything," sophomore Seven Bove said.

The switch from traditional retail shopping to thrifting is a growing trend in younger generations, originating from TikTok trends in 2020. With relatively cheap prices and the thrill of sifting through racks to discover unique pieces, many Dons are loading up their wardrobe with pre-loved clothing.

"I don't have a ton to spend on a lot of clothes so you can find cool stuff that's pretty cheap," Martinez said.

With each rack of vintage finds and hidden gems, thrifting offers more than just budget-friendly options; it provides a unique opportunity to express individuality and creativity. Many find the unpredictability of thrifting to be its most charming element.

"I do it because it's like a treasure hunt. When I find good things it's really fun, like gambling. Except for in a better manner," Depop seller and sophomore Caleb Birmingham said.

With the recent surge of online shopping, thrifting has followed the path of digitization. Online thrifting websites like Depop are growing in popularity and give students the ability to sell their old or unused clothes.

"It's a really fun way to make money and I get to do what I like to do, thrifting," Birmingham said.

Photos of: Kalia Johnson, Scarlett Wells-Feaster, Sabrina Koo, Max Martinez

Even with thrifting being a "cheap" alternative, prices have recently skyrocketed with both in-person and online thrifting. Many students find that thrifting and shopping in general is starting to be less and less affordable, especially on a teenage budget.

"Thrifting has gotten so expensive in the last four years. I would not say it's that affordable because resellers buy things and make them twenty dollars more than they should be. And I wouldn't say it's super accessible but it depends on where you live. In the Bay, things are pretty expensive no matter where you are," junior Zoe Szidon said.

Despite the climbing costs, thrifting culture is here to stay. Whether you are selling clothes on Depop or going to thrift stores with your friends, second-hand shopping is an affordable way to expand your wardrobe and make a more positive impact on the environment.

"When you find something it's always really cool because it's unique when you find it at a thrift store ... You kind of found something cool and unique and it's always fun [if you] weren't looking but you found [something cool]," Szidon said.

"Selling on Depop is a great way to empty out the closet to have an open space for new, cuter clothing."

- Style Store Club Founder and Senior Adriana Berloui

Photos of: Seven Bove, Cameron Zener, Michael Hamilton, Eli Sessums, Adrianna Berloui, Zoe Szidon, Trevor McCarthy, and Braedon Christie

Staff Music Picks

Exploring the music tastes of different staff members

Donavon McGrath, Arman Craig, Noah Frankel, and Trevor Krick, | Social Media Manager, Online Editor, and Staff Writers

Photos by Audrey Martin | Head of Photography

Spread by: Avery Robb | Print Editor-In-Chief

Monika Voellm

Spanish 4 Honors and Health and Social Development teacher, Monika Voellm enjoys listening to a variety of music genres, reflecting her diverse tastes and cultural background.

"I have been listening to R.E.M. a lot, it was one of my favorites when I was younger, and I just made a mix of my old favorite songs," Voellm said.

As a Spanish teacher, Voellm also enjoys listening to music that stems from Hispanic roots to reflect her class content and her own culture.

"I love Shakira's music. I love Carlos Vives also ... a lot of the music out of Colombia and of course [I listen to] Cuban music because I'm Cuban," Voellm said.

For Voellm, there really is "a light that never goes out," for her love of beloved bands from the past. These are songs that she would recommend to any students wanting to listen to some oldies music and explore new genres.

"I recommend R.E.M. I really like the Stone Roses and the Smiths, [which are all from the] 90s. [I also recommend] Sínead O'Conner," Voellm said.

Chris Busse

Digital Design teacher Chris Busse enjoys listening to many different genres of music, but one in particular stands out.

"It really depends on the mood, but for the most part, I'd say country is the one I listen to the most," Busse said.

Busse has a love for numerous music genres but especially appreciates the country music that reflects his roots growing up in Montana.

"I love Zach Bryan, but I've always loved the old-country, twangy style [like] Merle Haggard or Willie Nelson or anything like that," Busse said.

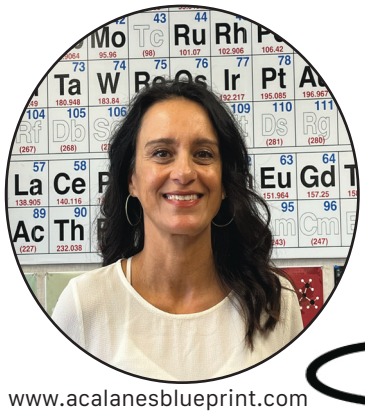
Music contains memories and for Busse, country music brings back fond moments from his childhood.

"There are definitely memories that coincide with the different songs we play, where I can put on a Zach Bryan song or put on a HARDY song, even a Morgan Wallen song, and I will remember certain memories of being simple country folk back on my parent's property in Montana," Busse said.

While Busse loves country music, he also enjoys hip-hop from the 1990s.

"I grew up in an era of hip-hop, where it was more simplified boom-bap beats with really cool lyrics from guys like the mighty Wu-Tang Clan, Snoop Dogg, or Dr. Dre," Busse said.

Daizy Asaravala



Chemistry in the Earth System and Advanced Placement (AP) Chemistry teacher Daizy Asaravala listens to the up-and-coming female rappers of the industry. She also likes to listen to old-school hip-hop and recommends that students listen to it as well.

"I do like the strong female rappers that are out now, Megan Thee Stallion, Doja Cat, Nicki Minaj, I kinda like that ... [students can] go back to old school hip hop [like] Tupac, Biggie, [and] Nas," Asaravala said.

Asaravala used to dislike country music but says that listening to newer country albums like Beyoncé's has changed her mind.

"I used to [hate] country, but then Beyoncé came out with a country album ... [and now I think that country music] is not that bad," Asaravala said.

Asaravala uses music in her everyday life to help encourage her in her daily tasks, such as exercising and cleaning.

"I use music to workout, I use music when I'm cleaning and setting up the lab, I blast hip-hop often [and] things that motivate me," Asaravala said.

Adam Garcia

AP US History and Government and Economics teacher Adam Garcia, loves most music, specifically 90's indie. The Pavement is his favorite group, specifically their first couple of albums.

"I got really into them when I was in college, they were just a little bit different than what I had been listening to and I had this obsessive phase when I was 20 where I would listen to them every day in the car on my way to work and school," Garcia said.

"Gold Soundz" is Garcia's first choice to start listening for those unfamiliar with The Pavement.

"It's a nice little song, it's under three minutes, it's catchy and [a] little bit poppy, it's got a cool bridge ... It's a really unique song that's musically distinct," Garcia said.

Although Garcia enjoys numerous genres of music, "Don't Stop Believin"' is at the bottom of Garcia's list because of how much it is overplayed.

"It is incredibly overplayed and I think the current generation of college students is doing that to the song," Garcia said.

Peter Stewart

Physics and Living Earth teacher Peter Stewart loves listening to rock and roll artists such as Bruce Springsteen and the band U2. Stewart has listened to this genre for years and still enjoys it every time.

"By far my favorite is Bruce Springsteen ... He's who I grew up on and love, and then U2 is another one that I love, U2 is the best," Stewart said.

Stewart commends Bruce Springsteen for creating songs that everyone can enjoy regardless of their music taste and recommends Springsteen to others.

"Well, if I'm trying to introduce them to Bruce Springsteen, I would probably have them listen to "Born to Run" or "Jungle Land." And if I was introducing them to U2, it would be "With or Without You,"" Stewart said.

Harriet Kaiser

Algebra 2 Advanced and Pre-Calculus teacher Harriet Kaiser takes it back to the classics when it comes to music. Often listening to rock and roll, "The Weight" by The Band is a fan favorite of hers.

"The Band is amazing because there were five members and almost all of them can sing lead. Levon Helm was amazing on drums, and something about the melody and the words ... I like the feel of it," Kaiser said.

When it comes to new listeners, Kaiser encourages students to listen to the classics.

"The Rolling Stones I would recommend ... I like "Beast of Burden" on that album but it's great overall," Kaiser said.

Although Kaiser enjoys many types of music, techno is not currently on her top plays because it can often get too chaotic.

"I probably wouldn't just put [techno music] on, and I have a lot of friends that do and it drives me crazy," Kaiser said.

Andie Case

Geometry and Algebra 2 teacher Andie Case enjoys listening to different genres, varying from 80s music to 2000s pop. More specifically, she enjoys the famous singer Taylor Swift and more underground bands like Rainbow Kitten Surprise.

"Well, I'm a Swiftie, so anything Taylor Swift. I also like this weird band called Rainbow Kitten Surprise, but it's not the type of music that you would think it is, it's alternative," Case said.

Case listens to a lot of famous songs from movies and pop culture trends.

""Life is a Highway", the *Cars* one for some reason. It really gets me through the tough times. I love "Love Story" by Taylor Swift. I listen to that a lot," Case said.

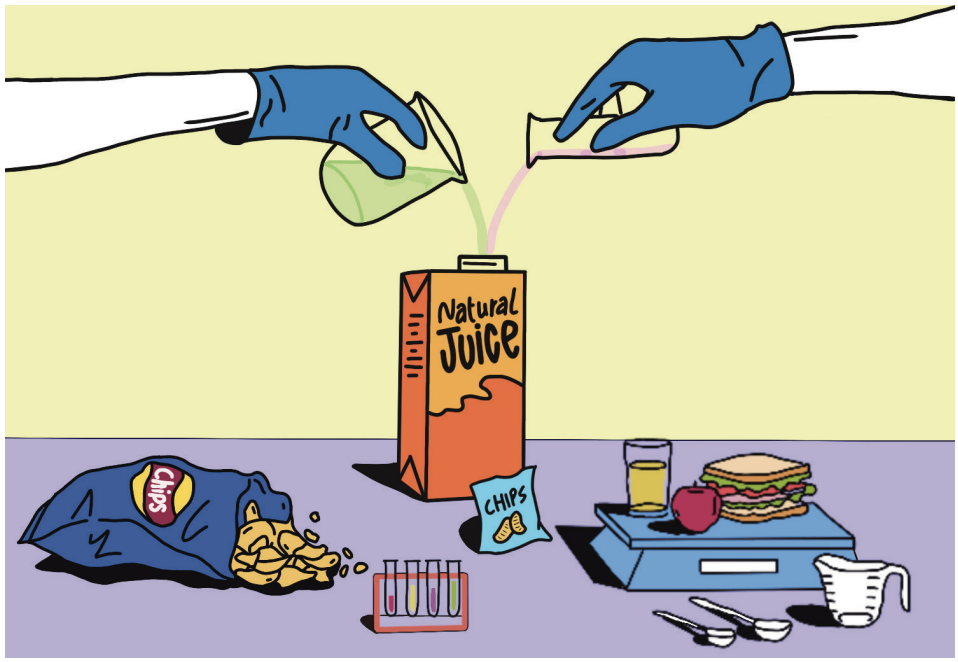
Case also appreciates songs that have a deeper meaning to them, even if they are not seen as "mainstream" if she agrees with the ideas they discuss.

"There is this really niche song called "These Roots". It's like a brother and sister band, and they play the guitar and sing. One song is about being in an environment that's conducive to your growth, to be supportive of your growth, and being in a place where you're supported to be a good version of yourself, I think that song makes sense because the roots are like supporting," Case said.

Food for Thought: The Threats of Artificial Food Additives

Food additives pose a threat to the health of consumers and the environment

Aamena Shipchandler | Print News Editor



Blueprint Graphic/Hank Bauer

Most mornings, as I make myself a bowl of cereal for breakfast, I glance at the nutrition label, trying to determine what is actually in my meal. As I scan through the ingredients on the list, I realize that I am eating chemicals. I suddenly stop, trying to pronounce and read the names of the ingredients on the back of the box: Butylated hydroxytoluene, potassium bromate, propylparaben. Finally, I realize that I do not even know what I am consuming.

The prevalence of artificial preservatives and food additives in our diets poses significant health risks to both consumers and the environment.

Synthetic food additives have been around for almost a century, with the first use of artificial food preservatives beginning in the 1930s. In today's modern world, their availability only increases as food production becomes more and more mechanized. According to a 2023 study in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, researchers determined that 60 percent of foods commonly purchased by Americans contain technical food additives including colorings, flavorings, preservatives, and sweeteners.

Understandably, many consumers do not examine the ingredients label of every food they purchase, and thus, do not know the ingredients and chemicals they consume daily. According to the National Library of Medicine, food regulation companies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) intentionally add over 2,500 chemical substances in order to modify the flavor, color, texture, stability, or cost of an item. These food regulation companies allow for an additional 12,000 substances to enter our food supply through packaging, processing, pesticides, or drugs that farmers give to livestock.

While some food additives can be beneficial to human health, many pose significant risks. One common artificial additive group is sorbates, including Potassium Sorbate, a chemical additive used as a preservative in food and drinks and is synthetically produced from sorbic acid and potassium hydroxide. Regulatory agencies such as the FDA recognize the chemical as generally safe when used in small doses. However, according to the National Institute of Health (NIH), Potassium Sorbate contains common hazards such as skin, eye, and respiratory tract infections and irritations. Furthermore, according to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), due to it being a synthesized ingredient, Potassium Sorbate has the risk of being contaminated with lead, arsenic, and mercury, which can be detrimental if consumed.

Another common yet harmful group of additives are synthetic food dyes which food companies use to make our foods more vibrant and enticing to buyers. According to the Environmental Working Group, these artificial colors are made out of petroleum-based chemicals that can cause behavioral and developmental issues in young children and can increase the risk of cancer for consumers of all ages. In particular, Blue Dye No. one and two, Red Dye No. 40, and Yellow Dye No. five, pose a significant risk of cancer, yet are found in many snacks and candies, including Cheetos, Skittles, and Gatorade. These food colorings are all banned in the European Union (EU) due to their harmful effects.

Other artificial food additives pose risks to not only human health but also to the environment. According to *The Lancet*, Ultra Processed Foods (UPF) are made of food-derived substances and additives that often contain things like palm and soy oils that, when synthesized, create significant environmental waste. Additionally, UPFs are typically made from petroleum-based ingredients that can contaminate the air, soil, or water supply during the production process. Furthermore, these foods then get packaged and distributed, creating additional waste and microplastic pollution from the processes of creating the product, packaging it, and finally distributing and selling it.

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The Hidden Cause of Allergies

Overplanting male trees drives up allergy rates

Tatum McElhattan | Print Arts Editor

If your eyes are watering and your throat is feeling tight and scratchy every spring, it is not just nature causing you problems, it can also be a consequence of human choices. The trees lining the streets of your city or the path in your neighborhood park may seem harmless, but the decisions behind their planting can impact your health in unforeseen ways.

Behind your allergy symptoms is "botanical sexism," a term coined by horticulturist and allergy researcher Thomas Ogren. Ogren studied ways to reduce pollen counts in the air to help those with allergies, and believes that unbalanced planting of male and female plants can increase pollen counts. Botanical sexism refers to the practice of only planting male trees in urban settings such as cities, which may seem to be an unassuming decision but can have numerous negative effects on public health.

Cities and municipalities often choose to only plant male trees because they do not produce fruit or seeds like female trees do. Fruit and seeds are often deemed as messy and require a lot of work to clean up the waste that would otherwise be left on the roads and sidewalks.

This practice began in 1949 when the annual *Yearbook of Agriculture* advised readers that "when used for street plantings, only male trees should be selected, to avoid the nuisance from the seed." Male trees continued to become popularized when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released almost 100 cloned and hybrid male maple trees in the years following the report.

However, planting mainly male trees has a serious underside, as they release large amounts of pollen into the air, leading to higher amounts of allergens in the environment. Such allergens can not only have severely detrimental effects on people with allergies but can also exacerbate their issues and have severe consequences for people with weakened airways such as asthma.

When urban planners decide which vegetation to plant in cities, they should be aware of the effect of pollen on their population as planting only male trees has a harmful impact. Instead of only planting male trees, urban planners should choose from a more diverse selection of trees and include a balanced mix of male and female specimens to reduce overall pollen levels while still supporting various ecological functions. In doing so, our environment will become safer for those with allergies and simultaneously promote biodiversity.

Allergy rates have been rising in the United States, with one in three adults reporting allergies and one in four children which amounts to over 100 million people, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. Exposure to high levels of pollen can trigger allergic reactions, leading to symptoms like sneezing, coughing, itchy eyes, and runny noses.

The increase in pollen and allergy rates can affect certain populations much more than others. Pollen can have significant negative effects on children, especially those with allergies or asthma. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), approximately 7.7 percent of children in the U.S. have hay fever, a condition commonly triggered by pollen. Allergy symptoms can interfere with daily activities, including school attendance and outdoor activities.

Additionally, children are at a higher risk than most for respiratory conditions due to their still-developing respiratory systems. Allergens can increase this risk and lead to developing asthma or other chronic respiratory issues like allergic rhinitis, making it important to manage and minimize children's contact with pollen during high seasons.

Women are also greatly impacted by airborne allergies and face more unique risks when exposed to high levels of pollen in the air. A 2010 study published in *Cell Biology* revealed that women with allergies are at a higher risk of developing leukemia, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer. This potential link between chronic inflammation from allergies, and increased cancer risk makes it clear that it is necessary to focus on women's health concerning airborne allergens rather

Blueprint Graphic/Bo Chevaleau

than prioritizing street aesthetics.

One obstacle to diversifying urban tree populations is the cost of maintaining female trees due to the upkeep of the fruit the trees produce. However, the argument overlooks several important benefits. These trees contribute to urban biodiversity and can provide fruit that benefits both wildlife and people. Additionally, the long-term savings in public health expenses and the environmental benefits could offset these expenditures. Investing in greener, more diverse urban spaces also supports overall well-being, making it a worthwhile investment despite initial costs.

An increase in female, fruit-producing trees would also cause an influx of wildlife into cities, including animals like raccoons, birds, and squirrels as well as various insects that would feed on the produce. While this would support biodiversity in the urban environment as animals could pollinate plants, disperse seeds, and even control pest populations, there would also be some negative effects. The increased amount of prey animals would lead to an increase in predators, such as coyotes which could lead to conflicts between animals and humans. Other wildlife could also spread diseases such as rabies that pose threats to public health, and cause dangerous traffic accidents.

The rush of animals would put pressure on urban infrastructure, with increased costs spent on wildlife management and control. Cities looking to manage these ecological impacts would have to take into account the effects on humans and wildlife equally. Cities could do so by choosing fruit trees that produced smaller, and less abundant fruit to attract fewer animals. They could also counteract such effects by planting trees that frequently fruit in less high-density areas where the presence of animals would have a smaller impact.

Planning for the future, urban planners can gradually diversify urban forestry, rather than going through a large-scale replacement of plants. Whenever new trees are planted, cities can begin to choose species that have low amounts of pollen, promote biodiversity, improve air quality, and overall negate the effects of clonal male trees being planted.

In addition to planting female trees, monoecious trees could also be planted, which are trees that produce both pollen and seeds, but on a smaller scale. These trees would help reduce the negative effects of female trees and overall contribute to a better outcome. Species such as Redwood trees, Coast Live Oak trees, and Carob trees which all produce low pollen counts and survive well in dry conditions would be excellent choices to plant in California.

San Francisco is currently undergoing an Urban Forest Plan, which started in 2015 but was delayed by the onset of COVID-19. They are still in their first phase where they are planning to plant 50,000 new trees throughout the city by 2034, and diversifying their choices of trees to plant would have numerous beneficial effects throughout the city. They also own 40 percent of the trees in the city which they can replace with female and monoecious trees if they need to be replaced. By taking these steps, San Francisco has a unique opportunity to not only expand its urban forest but also make thoughtful choices that can reduce allergens, enhance biodiversity, and improve overall public health, laying the groundwork for a more sustainable and resilient city.

Planting diverse trees has many long-term benefits, including a higher tolerance to pests and diseases that spread quickly with only one type of cloned tree planted in an area. As cities continue to grow, planting a variety of trees will have long-term benefits for both humans and wildlife in the urban area. This way, urban areas will remain green and vibrant for years to come while also reducing health risks for those with allergies and asthma living in the area.

Food Additives

Continued from 34

Despite the risks that food additives present, many consumers continue to buy products that contain these substances, largely due to a lack of awareness of their harms. The National Library of Medicine conducted a survey and found that 41.61 percent of respondents knew nothing about food additives and 55.03 knew very little.

To minimize these negative effects, consumers and policymakers must come together to reduce the prevalence of artificial food additives and provide information to consumers about their dangers. Consumers must educate themselves about the potential risks of additives on their health so that they can decide whether they want to continue purchasing these items. Although the FDA requires all food brands to list the artificial preservatives and food colorings that they use on their nutritional labels, these chemical names may not seem harmful or significant to many, and thus consumers end up not knowing the things they are actually ingesting. Higher awareness of the threats that artificial foods pose, which can be done through doing personal research about certain chemical additives, can give consumers insight into the harms they may face and can help them decide for themselves whether they want to keep purchasing a food product.

Additionally, food regulatory companies, especially the American FDA, must create stricter regulations for food companies and heavily limit, if not ban, the use of certain additives, preservatives, and colorings.

The EFSA took a safety review of food colorings in 2009, completing the review and updating the list of banned food colors in 2016. After learning about the risks of food colorings, especially Yellow Dye No. five and Red Dye No. four, the EFSA changed their food reviews, building accordingly off new data that suggested harm to their citizens. The FDA must follow suit. It is up to the FDA to take action by completing thorough safety reviews and potentially even banning harmful additives such as Potassium Sorbate, synthetic food colorings, and other preservatives that pose a greater risk than the benefits their use provides.

By creating safeguards and awareness for artificial additives in foods, and promoting less toxins in the American diet, consumers and policymakers alike can move towards a less harmful, more sustainable way of life.

We Cannot Buy a Better Planet

Sustainability is more than how we spend our money

Melina Galacatos | Online Editor

I used to think that my part in protecting the environment was to buy a reusable water bottle because plastic pollutes our environment. However, millions of people just pledging to use reusable water bottles will not change the current trajectory of our planet's health. Even the production of a water bottle causes pollution and is not as friendly as I once thought.

As people have become more aware of environmental problems, avoiding environmentally damaging companies and increasing support for sustainable ones has become a trend. A 2019 study published in the Harvard Business Review found that 65 percent of interviewed consumers wanted to buy from "environmentally friendly" brands.

Amidst increasing environmental concerns, some companies pledge to enact environmentally friendly policies. Signs on the sides of buildings and roads, and advertisements on television and social media tell me that I can do my part to prevent pollution by supporting specific brands and products.

While the rise in popularity of reusable water bottles and cute tote bags demonstrates a positive initiative, caring for the environment is more complicated than just purchasing goods that are labeled sustainable. Although well intended, these purchases often negatively impact the environment.

It is unsettling to think that we are trying to help the environment through our purchases, but may actually be contributing to the problem by not considering the full effects of what we buy and being wasteful.

Blueprint Graphic/Sof Cerruti

A popular initiative is switching from plastic to recycled plastic or alternative materials. Throwing out a plastic toothbrush and buying a sustainably sourced one does not reduce waste, even though the new toothbrush is made in an environmentally friendly way and meant to last longer. The "sustainable" toothbrush still must be produced, which contributes to industrial pollution. Then, the old plastic toothbrush is thrown away and transported to a recycling processing facility or a landfill, which contributes to Earth's pollution crisis either way.

It is easy to look past a single toothbrush, but when millions or billions of people think the exact same thing and toss a working item to replace it with a longer-lasting, "green" version, it can lead to an accumulation of waste and pollution.

While making a purchase may feel like only a drop in the ocean of environmental destruction, customers across the world are making the same purchases and fueling the company's production, even if that purchase is marketed as sustainable. However, small these purchases might be, they all build up over time to perpetuate the issue.

Sometimes the sustainable swap we think we are making might be no better than the original product. This is attributed to "greenwashing," a marketing technique where companies convince customers that their practices are more environmentally friendly than they really are.

In 2019, the clothing company H&M released the "Conscious Choice" collection which was a clothing line supposedly made from sustainably sourced materials. It was part of the company's advertised goal to rely solely on recycled or sustainably sourced materials by 2030. In 2022, the company was caught in a lawsuit because "Conscious Choice" was just as damaging as their other clothing lines. H&M is not an outlier.

Many other companies also use misleading and exaggerated claims of

having environmentally sustainable practices. For example, the beverage company Keurig Dr. Pepper produces single-use coffee pods to use in their coffee machines. The company claimed that all of these pods could be recycled. However, the pods are actually too small for many recycling processing facilities.

Keurig and H&M are only two examples of companies that falsely present efforts to be sustainable, and environmentally conscious. Likewise, so many influencers also appeal to environmentally conscious consumers by endorsing "green" products and brands on social media. However, they may not be aware that these trends lead to an increase in the number of people following false environmentally friendly advertising.

In a 2023 article, the British magazine *The Drum* found that 52 percent of 33,000 interviewed consumers worldwide had encountered greenwashing. This report does not represent the number of people who have come across greenwashed claims without knowing, thus the rate of effective greenwashing is likely higher. This marketing strategy leads to uncertainty regarding whether we are supporting sustainable policies or not. While yes, some companies do fulfill claims of being environmentally conscious, even then, replacing products with new "sustainable versions" leads to a new problem: overconsumption.

Making a change is not exclusively limited to protesting unsustainable policies, or developing a company that reduces or cleans the pollution caused by industrial processes. Instead, we can create a difference through making informed changes to our lifestyles. Despite companies and influencers claiming that specific products are good for the environment, we can not rely on the sense of sustainability put forward by a swift reinvention of our possessions. Instead, we must be mindful of the broad impacts of our lifestyles, and enact long-lasting changes to protect our planet.

Initially, the idea of an "environmentally conscious life" is overwhelming. How am I supposed to avoid the increasing yet innumerable amount of products and processes that hurt the environment? Obtaining sustainability is not only done by major changes like going vegan or being entirely self-sustainable. Sustainability will be achieved through the conscious everyday actions of the whole population. Opportunities exist for us to improve our impact, even by a slight amount. Asking ourselves important questions about our habits encourages an environmentally conscious mindset. Being mindful in this way means examining our impact on the environment, and is important when determining what to buy and when.

Blueprint Graphic/Sof Cerruti

Research what hurts and what helps the environment. Research what sustainability looks like. Research whether or not the "sustainable" brands and influencers we love are truly helpful. How wasteful are we? Do we often buy unnecessary amounts of fast fashion or replace things that are not broken? Instead, we can take good care of our things, to make them last longer and use them until they break, preventing overconsumption.

Do we make efforts to clean the environment when we can? Something as simple as cleaning up the hallways and classrooms at school, even if trash is not yours, can make a difference on a local scale. Or, you can go a step further and join larger community efforts.

The Golden Gate Parks National Conservancy is a non-profit that aims to educate and involve Bay Area citizens in the conservation and protection of the Golden Gate National Parks with career and volunteer opportunities. They lead clean-ups and maintenance for local beaches, parks, and trails to help keep our natural spaces clean and healthy.

New inventions, protests, and changes in policy are examples of personal dedication to protecting the planet. Enough of people making small changes like this will add up. We do not need to spend money on "sustainable" products to be sustainable. Being cautious of overconsumption and wary of greenwashing can ensure that our environmental impact is better tomorrow than it is today.

The Rise of MOL Flag Football

Lamorinda youth flag football league introduces an all-girls division

Helena McGinley, Owen Curley, and Max Trexler | News Copy Editor and Staff Writers

Photos by Cameron Thornton | Print Sports Editor

The smell of grass fills the early morning autumn air, and kids of all ages flood the fields at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate to enjoy a day full of football and fun.

This year, Lamorinda community members welcome the addition of an all-girls division to the Moraga, Orinda, Lafayette (MOL) flag football league.

MOL Football is a competitive flag football league in which elementary and middle school kids from the surrounding Lamorinda area compete against each other every year.

"I think one of the things that is wonderful about MOL is that the kids play and meet each other from all the different schools in Lamorinda, and they form friendships for years," MOL League Commissioner Craig Hunt said.

Team Brazil huddles during a timeout.

In the past, MOL followed the male California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) guidelines and allowed girls to join teams that primarily consisting of young boys. This year, MOL established its first all-girls league called the Olympic Division.

"So we allowed girls to play with boys, but they have their own set of rules this year. They play with the CIF same rules as the high school [girls] play, and so we have girls playing that are in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. We're super excited about it," Hunt said.

Many parents and athletes looked forward to the addition of a separate girls league, stressing the importance of female participation in male-dominated sports. Many also believe that adding an all-girls flag football league helps disprove the idea that football, and flag football, are only male sports.

"I know girls were definitely allowed to play. Not many of them did. So when this opportunity came on board, we were just over the moon and just so excited that they were providing this type of venue for us," parent coach Sol Henik said.

Team Brazil snaps the ball to begin a play.

With the addition of the Olympic Division, MOL encouraged high school flag football players to join the MOL workforce as either student coaches or referees.

"There are a few girls from Acalanes who are assistant coaches for teams, and it's all girls playing. So we put this together starting in May, and we got 70 girls on six teams, and they're all having fun," Olympic Division Coordinator Bill Fraser said.

Many agree that both high school football and flag football players are crucial to MOL's success, acting as role models to young children and giving valuable tactical advice to parent coaches.

"High schoolers will help [referee], and they will help coach some teams as well. They will help run evaluation day, so they'll go out. We have a day before the league starts to do evaluations of the kid, and so we'll have them help run that day," Hunt said. "We have quarterbacks that will come and throw passes to the kids and help them run agility drills and help with getting volunteers organized."

Players and referees meet before the game.

MOL can also allow high school girls to impact younger generations by allowing them to take part in an opportunity they did not have as children.

"I want girls to develop the skills to be confident in football and have the courage to try out a male-dominated sport. Being able to have their own league definitely develops their skills while also taking the pressure off the sport," Acalanes flag football player, MOL coach, and junior Lesley Trowbridge said.

In addition to providing job opportunities for high school athletes, MOL has impacted high school athletics by promoting high school flag football programs and getting young female athletes excited to join the programs at Lamorinda high schools.

"I definitely want to play flag football in high school because I am really enjoying it right now," MOL flag football player Lucy Pulichino said.

Some players appreciate the new all-girls league for the support and confidence it provides them.

"I actually have played with guys before. I played with them at a summer camp, and it's way more fun with girls because we all can cooperate better and have fun," Pulichino said.

Looking to the future, many believe that the popularity of girls flag football will increase exponentially, specifically with the addition of women's flag football to the 2028 Summer Olympics.

"Listen, there's no ceiling to this because the numbers keep growing and growing ... especially with [flag football becoming a sport] in the [2028] Olympics, it's something that these girls are paying more attention to," Henik said.

Dressing for Victory

Highlighting team dress-ups that promote team culture and athletic events

Hanna Wiśniewska, Sela Sarbiewski, Sydney Scovic, and Samantha Swift | Social Media Manager and Staff Writers
Spread by Molly Jones | Print Photo Story Editor

Whether it is dressing in red, white, and blue, decking out in camo or hunting gear, or wearing all one color, Acalanes athletes show out at school before sporting events.

While dress-ups commonly serve to build school spirit, Acalanes sports teams use them to publicize their games, promote student attendance, and bond with teammates.

For many players, the dress-ups get them in the athlete-mindset, preparing the team for dynamic play hours before the game.

"I like to dress up for games to let people know that it's game day and for team unity. During the day, when I see my teammates in their dress-up, it gets me excited to ball out," varsity women's volleyball player and senior Annie Baker said.

Players note that dressing up impacts

Blueprint photo/Sela Sarbiewski
The varsity women's volleyball team dresses up in camo before playing Campolindo.

team culture and commitment on and off the court. Components like these helped propel the women's varsity volleyball team to victory last season.

"Last year, we all wore [pajama] sets, and it looked uniform. It was against Las Lomas, so it was 'night night knights.' I think dressing up really helped us build the communication that we saw on the court to help us win," Baker said.

Nearly all Acalanes sports teams participate in the camouflage dress-up, tradition for rival Campolindo High School games. Dressing in camouflage emulates what one would wear hunting, symbolizing hunting the cougars.

"My favorite dress up is our Campolindo camo dress up. It gets us excited for our game, especially because it's our rival school," varsity women's tennis player and senior Jadith LaBonge said.

Courtesy photo/Kate Widmann
The varsity women's tennis team dresses up in neon before their match against Las Lomas.

Though they do not typically dress in themes, the football team also partakes in team bonding by wearing their jerseys on game day.

"One game, Tyler and I had to wear our full uniforms because we're the youngest on the team. That was funny but cool because it's all about the brotherhood," varsity football player and sophomore Finn Rivera said.

For most athletes at Acalanes, dressing up with teammates is an easy and effective way to foster new connections and raise spirits on a sports team. In women's flag football, it is all about sisterhood.

"I feel like [dress-ups are] really good for the team culture and spirit. It's just

Blueprint photo/Haley Chelemedos
The flag football team dresses up as Adam Sandler.

really fun wearing all the same colors and meeting at the flagpole at 8:15 [a.m.] to do eye black ... It's just been really fun getting to bond with the new team," flag football player and senior Sydney Clarke said.

Many reflect that the excitement of team dress-ups fosters a sense of community. Dress-ups have been a tradition at Acalanes for years and are a highlight of many sports experiences.

"I think dressing up is great for our team culture because we all get a say in what we wear, and we get to coordinate it as a team. Also when you see other people around school wearing the same thing as you, it makes you feel more connected," varsity men's water polo player and junior Thomas Parrott said.

Many players find this spirit builds team culture as teammates carry the dynamic

Blueprint photo/Hanna Wiśniewska
The cross country team goes all out blue for their meet.

energy outside of the sport.

"My favorite part about being on the team is definitely the culture and chemistry we all have together, this year especially, I feel like as a team, we have been the most connected and unified that we have been while I have been a part of this team. Our relationship goes outside the pool as we often have team bondings and hang out a lot," Parrott said.

Dress-ups are an integral part of the Acalanes athletic community, and for most, they represent what it means to be a part of a team.

"Dressing up for gameday just shows who we are as the Dons and how close we are when we all do it together as a team," varsity women's water polo player and sophomore Adelyn Horciza said.

***Blueprint would like to acknowledge that Haley Chelemedos, Cedric He, Molly Jones, Tatum McElhattan, Neve Murphy, Audrey Parkin, Cameron Powell, Emily Roberts, Sela Sarbiewski, Sydney Scovic, and Hanna Wiśniewska are a part of Blueprint staff and are in these photos.**

Revolutionizing Sports Officiating

Why automated refereeing should become commonplace in sports

Jake Colaco | Head Section Editor
Spread by Justin Rosenblatt | Senior Graphics Editor

With the unprecedented speed of modern technological innovation, many question why sports officiating has remained relatively untouched. In baseball, many fans and players have polar opposite opinions about the recent introduction of automatic strike zones in the minor leagues.

As many boast the benefits of consistency and accuracy, others lament the potential erosion of the human aspect of the game. However, history shows that critical mistakes of umpires have often diminished the integrity of the game, prompting the need for automatic umpiring in Major League Baseball (MLB) and the universal implementation of technology in professional sports.

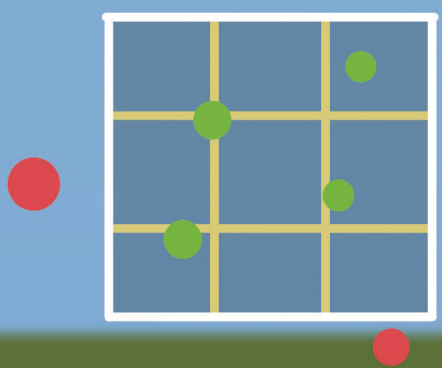
Human error is a large factor in sports officiating, and historically, some of the worst officiating mistakes of sports have happened in baseball. In 2010, Detroit Tigers pitcher Armando Galarraga had a perfect game with two outs in the ninth inning. On what should have been his final pitch, Jason Donald hit a ground ball between the first and second baseman, causing the first baseman to leave the bag and Galarraga to cover. In a split-second play, umpire Jim Joyce incorrectly called Donald safe, ending Galarraga's perfect game. When Joyce, along with the rest of the world, realized the inaccuracy and ramifications of the call, there was quite a fallout. Joyce apologized to Galarraga vehemently, but that did not stop him from receiving numerous death threats from baseball fans. That split-second decision will haunt Joyce for the rest of his life, but what if it could have been prevented? What if there was never a human there to make that call?

So far, the Automatic Ball-Strike (ABS) system in the minor leagues has yielded significant benefits. The ABS system uses high-speed cameras to track the baseball's trajectory in real time from the pitcher's hand to the catcher's glove. Data shows that MLB umpires have 90 to 95 percent accuracy on strike calls. While this might seem like a high percentage, it is important to note that not all umpires are equally consistent. For instance, while some umpires may have greater than 95 percent accuracy, others have closer to 85 percent. Numbers like those can drastically alter the outcome of a game and threaten the overall integrity of the sport. In comparison, the ABS system is nearly 100 percent accurate, removing the subjectivity of strike calls.

It is hard to argue with the facts, and transitioning baseball to be more talent than manipulation-oriented is objectively beneficial for the game. Adamant opponents of the ABS system argue that it removes the value of having a catcher, but proponents conclusively argue that it ensures the umpires facilitate fair play. Additionally, frequent arguments over calls disrupt the flow of the game, a problem that the automatic strike zone could easily solve.

If opponents still have a problem with automatic umpiring making baseball more fair and consistent, maybe increasing the excitement of games will entice them. It is a known fact that hitting a baseball is one of the hardest things to do in any sport, so why should the MLB continue to allow umpires to make it harder? Statistics indicate that a vast majority of incorrect calls are umpires calling balls strikes. This means that batters are disadvantaged by human error and, therefore, have a harder time hitting. This, coupled with the fact that most fans find higher-scoring games more exciting, should make it incredibly clear that human umpires need to go.

Although a transition to automatic officiating is easier in a sport like baseball, that does not mean that other sports cannot implement similar technology in the near future. Technology is changing the world, and everyone, even traditional sports fans, needs to accept that. Baseball needs to make the transition to automatic officiating immediately, and all sports should follow soon to preserve the integrity of professional sports.



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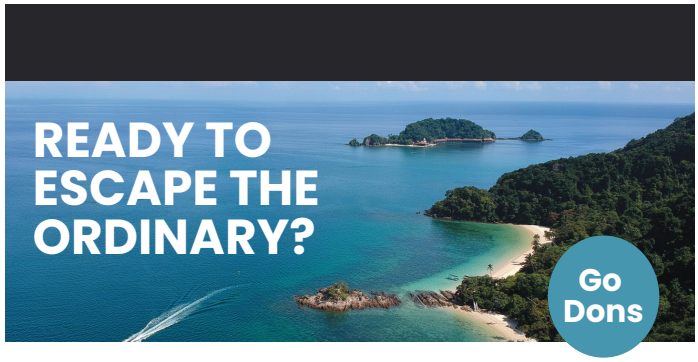

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Sports Beats

Cross Country

Cypress Reid | Staff Writer

Contributing Photo/Emmett Fretwell
Dash Tinianow rounds the corner of a challenging course.

As the season springs ahead, the Acalanes cross country team is looking to improve and maintain strong performances.

For their second meet of the year at the Farmer's Invitational at Hayward High School on Sept. 21, junior Harry Zimmerman scored eleventh place for the varsity boys race, and junior Nevis Murphy* finished fourth place for the varsity girls race.

The team looks to reestablish its community from last year, spurring the Dons onward to further victory.

Cross country leadership admires the athletes' dedication to the sport regardless of student attendance at meets.

"They don't have a stand full of people cheering them on and yet they show up and they work hard regardless, which, to me, is so cool because it just shows how special and focused and determined each one of these kids is," Head Coach Jeff Hutson said.

Flag Football

Mila Ellis | Staff Writer

Contributing Photo/Delphine Fisher
Senior Leila Hamidi gets set against Benicia.

After a challenging start, the women's flag football team (6-3 overall, 2-0 league) makes an explosive comeback to turn the season around.

The Dons faced off against Alhambra on Sept. 18, leaving with their first win of the season. The team carried its momentum to their second game against Concord, winning 20-13. The next week on Sept. 25, the Dons competed in two games, winning against Mt. Diablo 19-6 and Benicia 7-6.

On Oct. 2, the Dons prevailed against Benicia for the second time with a score of 12-6. They proceeded to shut out district rival Campolindo 21-0.

As flag football takes off, the team is ready to advocate for the recognition of their sport and embrace the changes it undergoes.

"We believe that the girls who play flag football deserve the exact same treatment and access that athletes in other sports have. We will advocate for these changes," Head Coach Mike Ivankovich said.

Football

Owen Curley | Staff Writer

Blueprint Photo/Isaac Topp
Tyler Kim scores a touchdown against College Park.

The Dons football team (4-2 overall, 0-0 league) start their 2024 campaign off hot trying to fulfill high expectations.

The Dons could not have asked for a much better start, starting off their year with two blowout wins against Lowell 49-21 on Aug. 30 and against Mt.Diablo 48-7 on Sept. 6.

The team then took on Del Oro for their first away game of the year on Sept. 13 and ended up falling short to the Golden Eagles 34-21. The Dons quickly bounced back against College Park during homecoming week with a high scoring win of 63-28.

Coming off a State Championship, the Dons meet high expectations and players know what they need to do to hit the ground running,

"[We are] essentially following the blueprint that the seniors laid last year in terms of discipline and in terms of how we approach practice every single day, and in terms of becoming the best players we can be," junior Bryce Birdsong said.

Men's Water Polo

Max Trexler | Staff Writer

Courtesy Photo/Chris Andre
Owen Andre looks for pass to score against California High School.

The Acalanes men's water polo team (8-8 overall, 0-1 league) is making waves in the 2024 season.

Despite a rough patch to begin the season, the Dons have dominated their last couple matches, beating Dublin High 18-6 and Napa High 17-9 on Sept. 20, before going into a slight struggle with two losses against Marin Catholic on Sept. 21 and James Logan on Sept 24.

Despite this, they finished third at the Vintage Valley Invitational and since then have faced challenging adversity, competing against top teams in Northern California.

With the season in full swing, new versatility goals have emerged for the team.

"We have improved a lot ... I believe we have already established ourselves as a team and we have been building a defensive identity, while also trying to improve offensively," Head Coach Nicholas Jordan said.

Women's Golf

Audrey Tugade | Staff Writer

Contributing Photo/Eric Morford
Taylor Baker winds up for a drive.

Despite a challenging start to the season, the women's golf team (4-4 overall, 3-4 league) is determined to turn the tide.

The Dons hosted Miramonte and Las Lomas on Sept. 9. They started the day facing Miramonte, where they won 239-262. They then competed against the Las Lomas Knights securing another win and a final score of 239-285. The Dons achieved an impressive undefeated day by winning 11 of 12 individual matches and tying one.

On Sept. 20, the girl's golf team faced Campolindo at their home golf course, the Moraga Country Club. Sophomore Miracle Gu recorded a strong 51 on the difficult course. The Dons met a narrow defeat to the Cougars, however claimed victory in a rematch on Oct. 1.

The team is determined to bounce back, with focused attention to detail and a renewed confidence for in their upcoming game against Las Lomas on Oct. 15.

"We've lost a few matches by a really low margin so we are hoping to build that back up and I am confident that is going to go well," junior Jordan Huskins said.

Women's Tennis

Sydney Scovic | Staff Writer

Contributing Photo/Eric Morford
Kate Widmann smashes a serve.

As the fall season progresses, the women's tennis team (3-5 overall, 1-3 league) is working on new strategies and gameplay elements to prepare for matches ahead.

On Sept. 17, the team went through tough losses to Miramonte 2-7 and Campolindo 8-1. Despite this, the Dons bounced back with a win against Las Lomas 6-3 on Sept. 24. The team lost to Northgate 7-2 on Sept. 26, however the players are looking ahead to their rematch against Miramonte on Oct. 8.

As the season progresses, the team works on getting into the right mindset for reaching new heights.

"Part of tennis is a mental game, [the team has talked through] what you should be thinking at times in a match [when] on the numbers you might be down. Turn things around just by digging down deep," Assistant Coach Joseph Schottland said.

Women's Volleyball

Maddie Obertello | Staff Writer

Contributing Photo/Jen Sarbiewski
Kylah Rose Fox gets ready for a shot.

With the women's volleyball season (12-11 overall, 3-2 league) in full swing, the players are demonstrating strong collaboration and experiencing great success as they face challenges in various games.

On Sept. 14, the team hosted the first ever Acalanes Invitational Tournament, showing immense grit and stamina as they worked for a win against Miramonte 2-0. Despite putting up a good fight, the team lost three other games, twice against the California Grizzlies and against Campolindo.

The Dons turned it around with a full house on Sept. 19, beating Campolindo 3-2 for the first time in 20 years.

After facing three losses to Las Lomas, Redwood, and San Marin, the Dons bounced back with wins against Sonoma Valley 2-0 and Berean Christian 3-1.

As the majority of players are returners to the varsity team, this team has played together before and it shows. The team values each other immensely and has curated strong connections on and off the court.

"Our success so far shows how well we click as a unit, which I think will only get stronger as the season progresses," senior Addy Treter said.

Women's Water Polo

Neve Murphy | Print Opinion Editor

Blueprint Photo/Justin Rosenblatt
Malin Stone passes the ball.

The Acalanes women's water polo team (11-2 overall, 1-0 league) continues to find success in the early season.

To kick off the Amanda MacDonald tournament on Sept. 20, the team defeated Gunn High School 15-3 and Marin Academy 14-6. The team advanced to the finals on Sept. 21 after dominating against Santa Cruz High School, then defeated Menlo 17-8, securing a tournament victory for the third year in a row.

On Sept. 24, the Dons beat Carondelet with a close victory of 8-7, hitting a buzzer beater shot to win the game.

The team attended a tournament at Soquel High School on Sept. 28, in which they went 1-1 against Stevenson and Soquel respectively. The Dons won their first league game against Las Lomas 8-2 on Oct. 2.

The girls have worked to not only improve their skills but build a new team dynamic with an influx of underclassmen this year.

"They have been putting in the work that is necessary for us to have the kind of team that we are used to having around here," Head Coach Misha Buchel said.

Read extended sports beats on
Blueprint *Online,*
acalanesblueprint.com

Athletes of the Issue

Blueprint Photo/Isaac Topp
McKenzie skillfully blocks a College Park lineman on Sept. 20, contributing to a 63-28 win.

Lesley Trowbridge

Sophie Chinn | Online Editor in Chief

As the flag football team (6-3 overall, 2-0 league) continues to make strides this season, junior Lesley Trowbridge has greatly impacted their success.

Acalanes implemented flag football as a fall sport last season, and Trowbridge's dynamic leadership and team spirit has since championed the team's efforts in creating a strong program.

"Since Lesley joined us this summer, she's done an incredible job of learning a new sport and accomplished everything she's been asked to do. Lesley is a leader by example. She shows up daily and works hard, which is all we can ask anyone to do," Head Coach Joe Escobar said.

Not only is Trowbridge a leader for this squad, but her work ethic and commitment have helped her develop new techniques.

"Her best skills are consistently snapping the ball to our quarterback, quick flag pulling, and catching on the move," junior Maya Shoenhair said.

As both a center and linebacker, Trowbridge plays on both sides of the ball, contributing to touchdowns and defensive stops.

"Lesley is a reliable target over the middle when we are on offense, and we can count on her to play any of our linebacker positions when we need her on defense," Escobar said.

Trowbridge motivates her teammates to perform both in practices and during games, which will be vital come the playoffs.

"She is a fearless, brave, and coachable athlete, willing to help the team win in any way she can," Escobar said.

Drew McKenzie

James Hanzel | Staff Writer

As the football team (4-2 overall, 0-0 league) looks to build on last season's state championship win, senior offensive tackle (OT) and defensive end (DE) Drew McKenzie has been dominant early on.

McKenzie's relentless work ethic emerges through his accomplishments both on the team and through league honors.

"Drew works very hard to become a great player and is a two-year starter for us. Last year he was all-league as a DE and OT ... [He] understands the game," Head Coach Floyd Burnsed said.

McKenzie has improved throughout his football career and has become a strong force on the team, using his talent to help the team make big plays.

"Drew's best skills on the team are his dominant pass rush abilities, as he is consistently able to apply pressure to the quarterback and get sacks and tackles to stop big plays," senior Brody Darin said.

On both offense and defense, McKenzie is a dominant player through his dynamic skillset.

"He is a really great athlete that contributes to the team's success on both sides of the ball," Burnsed said.

As a two-year varsity starter, Drew has developed a significant leadership role, with his coaches and teammates choosing him to be captain this year.

"Drew is always leading our team, especially the line, as he is one of the key players on both sides. He helps our team stay motivated and keep pushing especially during key games," Darin said.

Blueprint Photo/Isaac Topp
Trowbridge prepares for a snap against Benicia on Sept. 25, a league win for the Dons.

Games Section

Created by Sameed Marco, Neve Murphy, and Nico Roig | Head Cruciverbalists

U E S S T T R I C K E D E B A
V T K J U X C A U L D R O N R
B G E C T P T V F Z F U P V A
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M E U M W C V O U K B I Y Q O
G H O S T H X G Z I Q P E L F

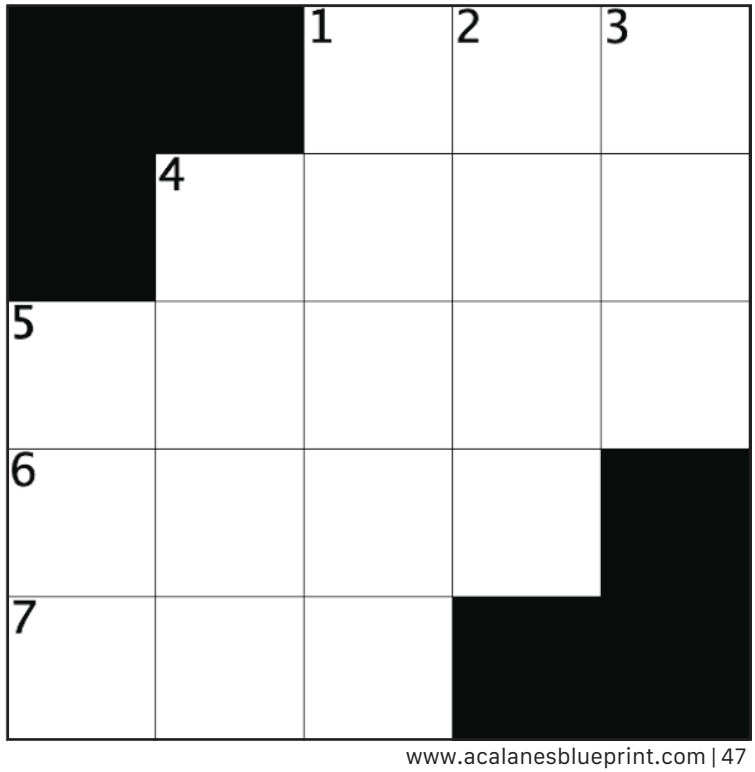
1. Creature with nine lives (3)
2. Object for swinging (3)
3. Sugary substance (5)
4. To decieve (5)
5. Broomstick rider (5)
6. To not respond to someone's texts (5)
7. To live "rent-free" in someone's head (5)
8. With blue, New York baseball team's colors (6)
9. What a doctor does to a patient (6)
10. A concoction (6)
11. Wilbur's literate friend (6)
12. Popular song by The Cranberries (6)
13. Maryland's football team (6)
14. Known for its seeds, bread and soup (7)
15. Blood sucker (7)
16. Frankenstien's creation (7)
17. A large vessel (8)
18. One might have them in their closet (8)

Across

1. JPEG or _____
4. Succeed (antonym)
5. Twix or Snickers, for example
6. Aglio e _____
7. 90's group with hit song, "Waterfalls"

Down

1. State of alarm
2. Enlish singer with debut album, *No Angels*
3. Stylish in the 90's
4. Autumn
5. A portable bed



MILK
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